SUEÑO

A Multimedia Play Based on the Life of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

The Degree of Master of Fine Arts in the

Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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2003

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ABSTRACT

The thesis documents and analyzes my collaborative process in the creation and performance of the multimedia theatre play Sueño, a work that explores the life of the 17th Century Mexican nun, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. In its main chapters, the thesis presents the historical research which informs the writing of the play, and then examines the development of the play's visual structure and multimedia elements, the design and rehearsal process, and the public performance. The primary question this thesis addresses is “How can the various dimensions of performance, video, lighting and sound design be integrated in order to evoke Sor Juana’s mindspace, a ephemeral world that unfolds, overlaps and blossoms like the nature of thought itself?”
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank my phenomenal Ohio collaborators Ran Berdichesky, Johannes Birriinger, Sue Calligaris, James Croson, Nancy Fox, Sean Hennessy, Eric H. Mayer, Sarah Reese, Brian Rotman, Jennifer Schlueter, and Julia Weiss.

For on-site assistance and collaboration on the video production in Mexico, I thank Sergio Rodriguez and Kzristina Lengyel (Arandas, Jalisco), René Peñaloza-Galván (former Convent Desierto de los Leones), Katalina Gutierrez (former Convent Desierto de los Leones and Teotihuacán), Michael Hironymous (Austin, TX), and Johannes Birriinger (Boca del Rio, Veracruz). I thank Katalina Gutierrez for her inspiring conceptual studies of Sor Juana’s cell and scientific experiments.

I wish to thank Mr. Michael Jeronomyth, librarian at the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection at the University of Texas at Austin, who provided access to the first editions of Sor Juana’s writings preserved in the collection, and The Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin for kindly supplying me with slides of original manuscripts that I have ordered for the production.

I am indebted to José Rosales, technician at La Catedral at the Zócalo, for explaining to me how the Cathedral’s structures are monitored and for allowing me to walk on the scaffolds of the main cupola, taking in such an exclusive view.
I would like to thank the Delegation of Cuajimalpa de Morelos, Mexico for allowing me to film at the former convent at Desierto de los Leones.

For support and feedback I thank San Juanita Alcalá, Cecilia Colomé, William Conable, David Esquenazi, Catriona Esquibel, Lesley Ferris, Verónica Grossi, Kenderick Hardy, Jill Lane, Alejandra Martin, William Wilborne, Katie Whitlock, Helga Winkler, Mary Tarantino, Barbara Thatcher, and Ted Ziter.

For thorough examination and careful guidance I would like to thank my advisor, Maureen Murphy.

I am grateful to The Department of Theatre for their assistance and support. This research was also supported by grants from The Graduate School (Alumni Grant for Graduate Research & Scholarship), The Department of Women’s Studies (The Coca Cola Critical Difference for Women Grant for Research on Women, Gender and Gender Equity) and The Center for Latin American Studies (Tinker Foundation Field Research Award).
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2000-present............. Graduate Teaching Associate, The Ohio State University

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Film & Video

2002.......Finally a Place Co-Star Dir: Serena Lin
2002.......Una Aventura Lead Dir: René Peñaloza-Galván
1999.......RECORDS Co-Star Dir: René Peñaloza-Galván
1999.......Trails Lead Dir: Johannes Birringer
1998.......Dear Anne Lead Dir: René Peñaloza-Galván
1997.......Centzontle Lead Dir: David Walding
1997.......La Llorona Lead Dir: David Esquenazi
1996.......Q'Aria Sin María Lead Dir: David Esquenazi
1990.......An Ivory Tower Lead Dir: Sergio Rodríguez

Theatre & Performance Installations

2002.......St. Joan of the Stockyards Slift Thurber Theatre OSU (L. Ferris)
2002.......Time and the Beast Rachel New Works Lab OSU (J. Schlueter)
2002.......Embers Narrator The Power Center MSU (J. Birringer)
2002.......Caminhando Puppeteer Sullivant Theatre OSU (J. Birringer)
2001.......Uncommon Clay Camille Thurber Theatre OSU (J. Thompson)
2001......**Beautiful View**
2001......**Alchemy of Desire**
2000......**Ohio State Murders**
1998......**Carmenland**
1996......**Sounding of Chakras**
1995......**My Heart**
1992......**Cuauhtemoc y Eulalia**
1991......**Cuauhtemoc**

Sonia  Wexner Perf. Space (Dada Kamera)
Simon  Mount Hall OSU (Caridad Svich)
Suzanne  Mount Hall OSU (Adrienne Kennedy)
DivaDougherty Arts Center (P.Hoffbauer)
The Cook  Candy Factory (E.Fullman/L.Montano)
Death  Helm F.A. Theatre (Deborah Hay)
Eulalia  Mexic-Arte Museum (F. Jacobi)
Malinche  Mexic-Arte Museum (F. Jacobi)

Personal works

2003......**Sueño**
2002......**El Entretejo/The Brow**
1999......**MIRAK**
1999......**Fishgarden**
1998......**Migbot**
1998......**El entretejo/The Brow**
1998......**North by South**
1998......**A Más Cinco te Desmayo**
1998......**between the places**
1996......**La mujer Zapatista**
1996......**Amando menos Cero**
1995......**The Day of the Dead**
1995......**Macorina**
1997-94.....**Malinchuca**

Sor Juana  Mount Hall OSU, OH 2003
Frida  Brown Auditorium UNCG, NC
Romola  DiverseWorks, TX
Dancer  Vogelfrei, Germany
Alfonsina  Winter Street Art Center, TX
Frida Kahlo  Mexi-carte Museum & La Peña, TX
Orgánica  DiverseWorks, TX
Maribel  Dougherty Arts Center, TX
Flor  DiverseWorks, TX
Zapatista  Ruta Maya CSChM, TX
Fem. Impersonator La Peña, TX
Catrina  La Peña, TX
Macorina  Chicago House, TX
Malinche  On tour, IL, WA, MO, TX

**FIELDS OF STUDY**

Major Field: Theatre

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: 1651-1695 Mexico City, Baroque Era.

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz is known for her voracious drive for knowledge and for her exceptional genius as a writer. From her silent solitary cell, this freethinking nun conducted scientific experiments, wrote hundreds of poems, plays, as well as theological essays. She was frequently attacked and chose to defend not only her own interest in worldly learning, but also the broad rights of women to education and a life of the mind.

Although I had been aware of Sor Juana’s fame and her stature within the Latino culture, I did not think that this woman from a very distant past could hold the same power over an American popular imagination as, for example, Frida Kahlo. I had performed Kahlo in a piece I wrote last year, and I now felt challenged by the questions of how I could bring Sor Juana to life and, how I could make a classic author, revered in the canon of our literary tradition, the subject of a dramatic performance accessible to an American contemporary audience. I wrote a new play based on her life, entitled Sueño, and my title refers to Sor Juan’s most important writings. I base the protagonist’s character on the more generally known facts of her life: her exceptional rhetorical skills, her poetic

1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE MULTIMEDIA PLAY

The new work, Sueño, is conceived as both a solo performance and a multimedia play involving characters on film. It is an interactive play that links the fictional realities created on stage with projected film scenes which evoke different temporal planes both realistic and hallucinatory or virtual. The primary world of the play is created on stage through Sor Juana's monologue and her imaginary interactions with other characters,
such as Maria Luisa, her protector and Father Antonio, her confessor. The stage action and lighting carefully define the locations where these dialogues and interactions take place. The majority of the scenes take place in her cell which also houses her library collection. In some instances, I break the illusion of this fictional world and make the protagonist address the audience directly, involving them in an argument, a story, a flashback or a dream-like vision.

The staged narrative consists of an extended dramatic monologue through which the audience experiences Sor Juana’s internal conflict with faith and her skeptical search for an understanding of the constructions of reality. She is very much a modern woman, a protagonist of reason and analytical thinking. Since her immediate reality is defined by her isolated existence as a nun in a monastery, she uses the confinement of her cell as a paradoxical space, letting her mind travel as far as it can to speculate on the universe, on existence, human evolution, and desire. Her reflections on species evolution and extinction are meant to be understood as provocations to the theological doctrines of her time. Given her rational mindset, she must inquire into the possibility of finding empirical proof of God’s existence.

Through use of digital video and its interaction with the lighting and sound design, the play evokes the second level, that of Sor Juana’s mindspace. Inside her head, a world of information resides. Here, outside the limits of time and space, Sor Juana is able to interrupt her memories, manipulate her fantasies or give careful consideration to her conceptual explorations. For example, in the filmic scene with her intimate friend, Maria Luisa, where she examines desire, Sor Juana is able to share with the audience her mediated memory in real time. The complexity of the experience is recreated in a layered
manner. The voice over is slightly off sync and does not match the black and white film. However, the unspoken tension of the scene is implied with the musical underscoring that is depicted by the struggle between two musical instruments. In her mindspace anything is possible, even “living” a memory she herself has never lived. In the final film sequence in the play, in which a modern actress takes on the role of Sor Juana, the video projection inverts the realities that have been established. Before the audience, the character on stage becomes a fictional memory living in the mindset of a modern film actress who attempts to interpret Sor Juana’s poetry.

In this manner I attempt to explore different fictional dimensions both through performance techniques, a non-linear plot structure, and the use of interactive digital video projections. The performer’s interaction not only corresponds with the video, but also with an intricate sound and lighting design. For example, at the end of Scene 3, when the performer holds the nautilus in her hand explaining the shell’s chambered structure, a lighting pattern of a spiral appears on the floor. She turns to look at it. The audience then sees a back wall projection of the living nautilus swimming in its natural habitat. They listen to the musical nautilus motif underscoring the scene. The performer then takes exactly sixteen counts to cross over to the projected spiral, submerge the shell in the water and begin to speak so that her text corresponds with the images projected behind her. In this way, I strove to create metaphors by giving specific attention and function to the objects seen on video and on stage.
1.3. Methodology and Structure

The form of Sueño falls under the genre of Experimental Theatre. There were several challenges I faced during the writing of a multimedia play, especially with regard to the structuring of the poetic sections and the imaginary dialogues with the characters on film. I wanted to use film sequences as visual metaphors and as concrete "image-instruments" in the action, rather than mere fantastical abstractions or illustrations projected onto the back of the theatre space. Other challenges were how to coherently edit the material so that transitions flowed smoothly into the dramatic action, and how to infuse the piece with emotional tension so that the characters move the audience and the piece does not remain solely an intellectual exercise.

The creative process, which is documented in this thesis, investigates the various stages of the writing, the film production, the collaborative design process, and the staging. Throughout the writing of the play I sought to discover new relations between the spoken and the unspoken, the physical movement and the image projections, the overall narrative structure and the intimate moments in which Sor Juana’s inner conflicts could be discretely revealed.

Sueño is structured in a non-linear fashion with a prologue and ten scenes which include dream sequences and fantasies that are visualized directly as filmic projections and interactions between the characters on film and the actress on stage. I perform the role of Sor Juana, both in the theatrical space as well as in the dream sequences filmed on location in Mexico. The play explores a form of visual and poetic theatre not based on conventions of naturalist or realist theatre. Moments of Sor Juana’s inner conflict are revealed in silence as visual, choreographed actions. Others involve particular gestures.
such as a hand writing or a hand striking. These are repeated and echoed at other points in
the play, like poetry of movement which the audience can remember and associate. The
dramatic action is maintained both by a spoken monologue, and a subtext that is
disclosed via its various intermediary relationships to the film scenes and the play's
motifs.

The primary visual metaphor of the play focuses on the image of the caracol or
chambered nautilus. This is initiated during the prologue, when Sor Juana reaches into
the bottom of the well to find the shell with an encoded scroll inside. As she studies the
specimen she realizes that its shape and encoding signifies a lifetime of evolution into
perfection and absolute symmetry. The nautilus shell becomes living proof of how
immortality can be made possible. She meditates on this possibility and concludes that
transcendence can be accomplished through constant dedication and perfection of form.
In this way, Sor Juana emulates the creature by devoxing herself to her writings and to her
immaculate mental constructions. I base my script on some of the mythical and
cosmological images I found in Sor Juana’s Primero Sueño, a philosophical-moral poem
that ponders on the soul’s ability to transcend matter. Direct visual references to her
cosmological images are made in the film sequences. A striking fist alludes to a
prevailing shadow. She is seen ascending the pyramids of Teotihuacán. Aspiring to be
like the defiant Phaeton, she is captured writing against a rising sun. In my script I am
most interested in the protagonist's skepticism and the fear, which she is not quite able to
articulate until the end, that there may not be any proof of our existence, and that there
may be nothing left when we die. In the last scene, her identification with the nautilus,
leads her into an empty space, a void where she exists outside of history.
The play not only deals with this metaphysical search, but also exposes the existential challenges that Sor Juana faced during her struggle with the Church and the Inquisition, represented in the play by her Father Confessor. I also dramatize her ambivalent relationship to the Vicereine of New Spain, Maria Luisa, the Countess of Paredes. The play culminates in a psychological crisis that her writing and her intellectual vanity have generated. Sor Juana is charged with heresy and is put on trial by the Holy Office. Her cell is emptied out and she is forced to abandon her writings. Consequently, her world of intellectual independence collapses. She is resigned to die, but the play ends with a final vision of the future in which her writings will have survived.

1.4 ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The main body of this thesis is divided into five chapters. Following the introduction, Chapter 2 provides a historical and cultural context that informed the writing of the play as well as the choices I made in regards to the content of the play. The first part of Chapter 2 introduces the reader to Sor Juana's world and thus to the intellectual frame of the play. The second and third parts give an account of Sor Juana's most important writings and her literary reception.

The final section of the chapter introduces the motifs that link the ten scenes of the play and clarify the transformation of the protagonist. These motifs, which emerged from my research in the University of Texas-Austin Library of Latin American Studies and my site-specific fieldwork in Mexico, focus on Sor Juana's intellectual pursuits, her literary writings and scientific research interests, her personal relationships (to her Confessor and her protector), as well as her public defense.
Chapter 3 presents the final script of Sueño and the scene-by-scene score for the stage actions, including motivations, given circumstances and directions for the physical activity. I also list the techniques that I utilized in the construction of the character, as well as the specific exercises that help me as a performer to physically and mentally be responsive to perform in a multimedia setting.

Chapter 4 carries the central weight of the thesis. The primary question that I pose in this thesis grounds my choice for the particular performance technique and non-linear plot structure: Can the use of media in performance suggest an ephemeral world that unfolds, overlaps, and blossoms like the nature of thought itself? I argue that the performance's use of interactive digital technologies connects it to a new aesthetic sensibility based on principles of simultaneity and multiplicity. The performer in Sueño is seen on stage and on film; she is immediate and distanced; her thoughts can travel into different time frames and cross different spaces. Cinematic form enters the theatre, either through the work of the camera or the digital editing. The fictional world onstage can contract (close-up), expand (wide angle) or distort the projected image (digital manipulation). The new digital technologies invite audiences to perceive and receive information in a different way. Since Sueño is built on the experience of an extended collaborative process which embraced all stages of the multimedia composition and production, I hope that my documentation can contribute to the scholarship that has recently emerged on hybrid and transmedial theatre and performance.²

Sueño was conceived as an experimental play exploring the interface between live performance and media, I emphasize the different kinds of functions played by the video projections and discuss the multimedia technique employed by each filmmaker in the
production. I also elaborate on how I interacted with video projections and bring attention to the special requirements that were implemented in regards to the lighting and the scenery. Lastly, I mention the role of the film actors. I give a short description of the characters that were represented and then I explain why I cast the actors that eventually participated. I comment on how I thought they embodied their characters. In some instances, I briefly recount some of the challenges confronted during the video shoot.

In Chapter 5, I offer a critical evaluation of a shared design process and describe how the various design elements were integrated in order to depict a layered reality existent inside Sor Juana’s mind. This chapter is divided into six sections. The first section introduces various aspects of the artistic conception of the play and the collaborative process that shaped the production of Sueño. The subsequent sections are dedicated to the elaboration on each of the collaborator’s involvement. I define their role, our working relationship and their influence on the creation of the piece. I address the issue of direction and argue that even though my own performance and delivery was guided by two specific artists, Johannes Birringer and Jennifer Schlueter, the overall design was not guided by a single directorial viewpoint but evolved from a collaborative coyuntura process. In this process, the work was “devised,” meaning that its creation involved the close interaction and exchange among artists from different disciplines. I provide a detailed account of my relationship to the design collaborators and the multimedia design of the performance, the lighting, sound and costume design, the script and the performance development.

Chapter 7 addresses the organizational and technical aspects of the production. It examines the Department’s role in facilitating the creation of a multimedia work in terms
of the resources and infrastructure made available. Furthermore, I give an account of the technical shortcomings that I encountered during the rehearsal and the development of the multimedia work.

I set aside Chapter 8 to include any type of comment on the reception of the multimedia performance by the audience and departmental faculty members. Finally, in Chapter 7, I conclude by addressing the main question at the core of this thesis and by making a critical statement with regard to the most personal realization I had during the creative process.

Since I have collaborated with several artists during the research and production processes, illustrations of the films, drawings and sketches are a part of my documentation throughout the thesis. During the run of the performance, I also devised a small visual exhibition in the foyer, to provide the audience with contextual information about the play. Programs and a review of the work are included in the Appendix.


CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH

Fig. 2.1 Portrait of Sor Juana by Miguel Cabrera, 1750 [detail]

2.1. The World of Sor Juana

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz was the most famous and prolific Baroque writer New Spain\(^1\) ever produced. Even though there were many competitors that flooded the literary market of the seventeenth century, it is ironic that Sor Juana, a woman, a nun, a self-taught intellectual deprived of a formal education, could have attained such a prominent
position. From her monastery cell, this intellectual used literary forms to explore
intangible experiences and participate in our world's cultural conversation. Her plays
were performed; her poems cherished; her writings published; her genius applauded in all
Spanish and Portuguese domains at that time (that is half the western world!). Her name
is usually followed with glowing epithets such as the "Phoenix of Erudition in All
Sciences", "the Immortal Glory of New Spain", the "Tenth Muse." This "muse" inspired
many with her erotic and sacred poems, ballads, profane comedies, philosophical poems,
theological essays, and an autobiographical defense that marked her as a proto-feminist,
claiming women's right to study and cultivate their minds.

In 1691 she was reprimanded for having written a theological essay titled Carta
Atenagórica. In her Respuesta, she defends herself by explaining how her innate
curiosity, an "inclination", an intellectual passion propelled her to compulsively question
life phenomena in order to understand existence. She tells her persecutors that from the
point of conception, her nature had been indomitable, in spite of punishment and
restraint. This free-thinker manipulated circumstances in order to pursue her objective
using various tactics -- pleading, deception, disguise, coquetry, flattery, condescension,
abstinence, gender negation. At the age of three she secretly learned to read. At the age of
eight she contemplated cross-dressing in order to attend the university and study science.
To improve her studies and force herself to retain information more efficiently, she often
cut off her hair and abstained from cheese, a food she delighted in, but which was
believed to "dull the mind".

Her genius became widely known when at the age of sixteen the Viceroy of New
Spain called upon forty scholars of all areas of study to interrogate the prodigy. The
young Juana de Asbaje y Ramírez excelled and surpassed all of them. She was immediately integrated into the Viceroyal Court as a lady-in-waiting. Many courted her because, according to the sources, she not only possessed a brilliant mind, but the young Juana was also exceptionally beautiful and charismatic. Octavio Paz in Sor Juana or, The Traps of Faith, translated by. Margaret Sayers Peden (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1988) uses the word "seduction with its varied resonances, intellectual and sensual [to convey] the nature of the attraction" Sor Juana exerted.\(^2\) Her confessor, Father Antonio Núñez de Miranda, feared that this unique combination of intelligence and beauty attracted too much attention at the court. According to him, "God could not do greater harm to this realm than by allowing Juana Inés to remain in the public eye".\(^3\)

Juana de Asbaje y Ramírez was born in San Miguel Nepantla in 1651 and died of a plague in 1695 a year after her abjuration, when she was forced to renounce her life as a writer. At the age of nineteen she abandoned her worldly life. She was initiated into the convent of the Order of St. Jerome under the name, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and spent over 25 years enclosed within stone walls. Even though she did not have a religious vocation, she complied with her spiritual obligations and used her spare time to focus on her main interest -- secular studies. Despite the fact that she had abandoned the public sphere, her audience did not abandon her. Her followers corresponded through letters or by visiting her. She welcomed her visitors and hosted intellectual discussions from within the convent's locutorio, a visiting room separated by iron bars where Sor Juana held her discussions. In exchange for her grace and her poetic writings she was compensated monetarily with gifts and with political protection. This explains how she managed to accumulate one of the largest private collections of books in the Americas during her
lifetime. Her cell was filled with books, works of art, scientific apparatuses and musical instruments. For over 20 years, the convent seemed to be an ideal sanctuary for her personal pursuits. Finally, in 1694 she was forced to abandon secular studies and devote her life to a meek path of perfection via prayer and mortification. Much information about crucial episodes of her life is still missing. Her most personal correspondences were dispersed, destroyed or lost. Two hundred years after her death, adamant scholars have been able to unearth documents that clarify two perplexing questions: Why did this brilliant and beautiful woman renounce a promising worldly life and enter the convent? And, why at her peak of success did she fall silent and cease to read and write? The information that has been recovered over the last twenty-five years has provided concrete facts and now seeds doubt as to whether Sor Juana silently submitted to the prelate’s dictum. Contrary to what was believed, the documents give evidence that after being dispossessed of her library, Sor Juana continued to write and collect books. In 1980 a letter known as *Carta de Monterrey*⁴ discloses how Sor Juana dismissed her confessor, Father Antonio Nuñez de Miranda. A second letter found in 1982, *Carta de Sor Serafina de Cristo*⁵, along with a postmortem cell inventory of her possessions (1995)⁶ and twenty riddles (*Enigmas ofrecidos a La Casa del Placer*)⁷ suggest her rebellious nature and forces us to reinterpret her final years.

Even though she came from a middle class landowning family, she was one of six illegitimate children from a *Criolla*⁸ woman, Doña Isabel Ramirez de Santillana. Little is known of her father. It is presumed that his name was Pedro de Asuaje⁹ and that he was of Basque origin. Sor Juana never mentioned his existence and referred to herself always as a "daughter of the church." She claimed this parentage since the Church had cleared
her birth defect -- not having been legitimately claimed by her father. In the seventeenth century aristocratic society of the city of Mexico, class and family lineage were determinant factors to achieving success in life.

In the seventeenth century, the New Spanish lands were presided over by a Viceroy, an appointed representative by the King of Spain. The Viceroy had political and judiciary power and his court centralized all political systems. However, the justification of the conquest and its dominion over the new land depended on evangelization, a constant conversion of indigenous people who were considered heathens. The natives were stripped of their history and heritage. Their monumental pyramids were demolished, and upon these ruins cathedrals were erected. In this way, the religious policy of linkage had been established. Its intention was to bridge the communication gap between the natives and the Christian Criollos. Ironically, the convents themselves, according to Asunción Lavrin in Sor Juana y su mundo: una mirada actual, edited by Sara Poot Herrera (México: Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana, Instituto de Investigaciones de la Cultura, 1995) existed for the purpose of perpetuating a hierarchic society and the purity of Spanish blood. At least half the land was in the hands of the church. And the church, as Octavio Paz points out was similar to our modern day corporations and political bureaucracies, infested with political ambitions. Even though the Archbishop had ultimate religious power, he was in a constant rivalry with the Bishop of Puebla, the other great city of New Spain. In his analysis of the political and religious context, and the conflicted social relations among the racially mixed population, Paz describes Sor Juana's aristocratic patriarchal society as "rich and sensuous, but devout and

15
superstitious; obedient to royal power and submissive to mandates of the Church, but shaken by strange deliriums that were both funereal and licentious.\textsuperscript{13}

The convent environment, of course, cannot be thought of as an isolated universe in a vacuum. According to Lavrin it was composed of a kaleidoscopic web of relationships which reflected these conflicted social relations. The cloistered inhabitants confronted innumerable personal and institutional problems. In spite of the four vows of poverty, obedience, chastity and perpetual enclosure, the convent rules were at times loosely enforced. There were various opportunities to transgress these religious dictates. Nuns were allowed to establish friendships with the opposite sex. Even though direct contact was strictly supervised, their profession did not shut them off from the weaknesses of the flesh. Some nuns established affectionate bonds with those men who had access to them—workers, doctors, barbers, confessors, members of the prelate. Sor Juana, as previously stated, was frequently visited by many of her friends and admirers. Even though the locutorio had bars to prevent full physical contact, Lavrin points out that some nuns were reprimanded for handholding and expressing erotic tendencies.\textsuperscript{14} These daily temptations against vow of enclosure and chastity forced the nuns to struggle to obtain a higher spiritual realm through prayer and mortification. They exercised corporal and mental disciplines, such as singing, an indulgence of the holy sacraments and a strict abstinence from food. The truly devout would challenge themselves to greater depths of humiliation by self-flagellation, scourging, eating leftovers from the floor or kissing everyone's feet while kneeling. "Within the convent took place acts of extreme penitence and the surrendering of the body [contrasted with] with chocolates and lavished dinners."\textsuperscript{15}
Cloisters were not only centers of faith, but could potentially generate personalities of popular culture. Nuns with ambition could aspire to distinguish themselves and enhance their position by displaying their religious faith extraordinaire. In order to attract donations, pious actions, and to increase the number of neophytes, it was not uncommon for cloisters to publicize nuns with special ascetic visionary gifts, such as miraculous hallucinations to be interpreted as signs of their potential saintliness. Even though Sor Juana was not saintly, she was a critical asset to the St. Jerome Convent. Due to her literary brilliance and political ties, the cloister was much favored by the Viceroyal Court, the aristocracy and the prelate. Sor Juana’s administrative position as accountant/archivist, and role as clever investor and financial manager allowed her to generate monetary gains for the convent.

This can then explain why she enjoyed for a long period of time her disproportional privileges -- a luxurious cell/study with the accumulation of many valuables, frequent visits, regular correspondences, published works and fame.\(^\text{16}\) There is no doubt that she did posses a sharp steely willpower which defied almost all imposed restrictions. However, her disobedience, interpreted by her as free will, was always backed by higher ranks of power.

The aristocracy was fond of literature and art. The court was a place where good taste was refined and aesthetic culture was propagated. Paz emphasizes the importance of the culture of the spoken word. He describes Baroque literature as elitist and "masculine, erudite, conceptista\(^\text{17}\), sententious, ingenious, clerical, courtly".\(^\text{18}\) In order to be respected one had to show decorum and spontaneity. Wit and conceit were indispensable. It is not difficult then to imagine how Sor Juana by appropriating a predominantly masculine form
of culture became an essential player in the elite circles. The seventeenth century was an oral culture\textsuperscript{19}; printing was expensive and not as accessible as it is today. People converged for intellectual exchange in church rooms, at university halls, at palace drawing rooms. In the City of Mexico, the cultural conversation took place in the convent locutorio at St. Jerome where the crudeste nun presided. Sor Juana was known to possess an unfathomable ability to spontaneously create verse with perfect structure and intriguing coded speech in various languages. At the locutorio, when among her friends the ultimate entertainment was solving poetic riddles, reciting sonnets and discussing philosophical queries. Sor Juana was a breathing encyclopedia and a vital judge of her peers' intellectual accuracy and faculties. According to Antonio Alatorre, in his book titled \textit{Serafina y Sor Juana (Tres Apendices)}, members of the prelate consulted with her on theological matters. Sor Juana was able to cite papal bulls to build cases. This leads Alatorre to believe that her library could have included ecumenical councils and encyclicals. A contemporary of hers, Fray Manuel Argüello, a Franciscan scholar, won a scholastic debate and accredited this to Sor Juana's guidance. Also high-end censors of the Santo Oficio\textsuperscript{20}, such as Fray Antonio Gutierrez, submitted their rough drafts on dictums to her and took out books on loan from her library.\textsuperscript{21} Celebrities from overseas would come to meet this "extraordinary nun." Mathematician Father Eusebio Kino, on his visit to Mexico, gave her a copy of his essay \textit{Exposition} and requested her feedback. Alatorre lists a series of people that met her first hand and have testified their experience. "Syllogistically delineating consequences, arguing scholastically difficult debates over various sermons, she advanced her discourse with major refinement; sometimes spontaneously composing verses, in various languages and meters. We were all in awe
how she would win over the acclamations of the most rigid courtly gathering."²² Alatorre, in a curious twist, then adds that "she was a woman, yet the truth was that she was a man and of the fiercest, of the most eminent of all in the genre of good literature...Those who read her are happy to know a prodigy, but more joyous are we who were fortunate to merit being her listeners".²³

2.2. SOR JUANA'S WRITINGS

This literary reputation did not come to Sor Juana as a divine endowment. Her ferocious book fetish began at the age of ten when she went to live with her grandfather in Amecameca and devoured his entire library. In 1700, her biographer, Father Diego Calleja, states that she never received any formal education, with the exception of Latin, which she mastered after 20 lessons. It is difficult to categorize Sor Juana's mind in a particular genre. She cultivated a self-taught, interdisciplinary knowledge. Electa Arenal, in Two Hispanic Nuns of the Seventeenth Century, defines her education as belonging to scholasticism and Renaissance humanism; but in regards to her poetic and dramatic output she is Baroque or Mannerist. However, in her intellectual orientation, she is at the dawning of the Age of Reason.²⁴

Her range of literary output was tremendous. Even though she departed from styles prevailing from her times, Baroque Mannerism and Conceptismo, "it is not enough to say that Sor Juana's work is a product of history; we must add that history is a product of her work".²⁵ Her work covered a wide variety of subjects always with a deliberate perfection of form. The themes varied from amorous obsessions to philosophical concerns. She was a master at meter constructions and she was able to execute all the
standard verse forms and their hybrid constructions. Furthermore, she was able to sell and find a constant market for her sung poetry known as villancicos. Her theatrical works, religious allegories and burlesque comedies were performed in convent and court auditoriums. Out of her entire body of poetry only one tenth is actually religious. Her lyrical love poems were most prominent and were constantly reprinted and published. When one adds the courtly poems (romances, decimas, sonnets, ballads, loas) one is able to see that more than two thirds of all that she wrote was commissioned. Her work was her currency. She paid in verse with intelligent reverence and ingenious flattery to her patrons. Writing was not always a mere exercise to exhibit her skill. Her work was also a deeply personal process in which she pondered upon existential matters, as well as erotic fantasies. Her Primero Sueño, a 975-verse philosophical poem published in 1692 is considered her most complex and sophisticated poem. She claims it to be her most personal piece. However, in my opinion, her most personal piece is her autobiographical defense, La Respuesta, in which she voices her inherent right to cultivate her mind and express it through her writings. Unfortunately, this bold document not only publicly revealed Sor Juana’s true intellectual capacity and passionate nature, but also justified to her overseers why she should be irreversibly punished. In 1693, after two years of scrutiny, the conflict was resolved. Sor Juana signed a formulaic repentance and vowed to abandon her writings. Her entire library was then seized and sold.

Why was Sor Juana’s punishment so severe? Were her writings, Carta Atenagórica and her Respuesta heretical? Who is responsible for her abjuration? After losing her extensive library, her financial estate and her freedom to write, did Sor Juana really change her ways?
Caught between prelate rivalries, Sor Juana was used to diffuse the built up political tensions and to confirm misogynist values. The Bishop of Puebla, Father Manuel Fernandez de Santa Cruz, requested that Sor Juana write a critical essay refuting the theological stance by well known Portuguese Jesuit Antonio de Vieyra. In his sermon, Vieyra discussed God's finezas, expressions of love. He offered a definition of what could be considered a fineza. Then he discussed and stated the flaws found in the opinions of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Saint John Crisostomo and Saint Agustine. As requested, in her Carta Atenagórica, Sor Juana defends the Fathers of the Church with a long series of syllogisms and biblical citations. She then effortlessly disproves Vieyra's own grand proposal of God's greatest fineza by demonstrating that what he declared was not only ludicrous, but contradictory to the sacred scriptures. Before making her last closing remarks, she remembers that she had been asked to offer her own opinion on the subject matter and so she humbly states it. \[33\] This irreverent act antagonized many who favored Vieyra's views. The Archbishop of Mexico, Father Francisco Aguiar y Seijas was among those enraged and interested in punishing the nun into retraction.

Three months after receiving a pseudonymous written reprimand and becoming aware of the increasing criticism against her having voiced her opinion, Sor Juana felt compelled to uphold her position with her famous Respuesta, instead of stating a retraction. In it she defends her right to study secular literature, to write verses, and to express the intellectual nature of her "inclination" -- which is to question anything, including the opinion of an illustrious man who had the audacity of refuting the opinions of Holy Saints.
There are many theories in regards to the real identities of the players at hand. The antagonists can not be precisely determined since the criticisms were signed with pseudonyms. Regardless of who was responsible, two factors can be determined. The church authorities wanted to avoid scandal at all costs; and they must have been high ranking officials since they managed to administer a long, secret inquisitorial process against Sor Juana's life-style and religious vocation. Maria Luisa, the Countess of Paredes, managed to delay the effects of the attacks by publishing Sor Juana’s second collection of works and strategically including her Carta Atenagórica and the approving appraisal of it by influential Spanish Holy Office Inquisitors.

What first seemed to be a playful rhetorical essay, ended in a painful trial that resulted with her self-abjuration which allowed the Church to take control of her voice. She was forbidden to ever write again, and was forced to give up all her possessions in life and after her death. Her large collection of books, instruments, jewelry was sold and her financial investments confiscated.

In 1995, the inventory of Sor Juana's cell, was recovered by the scholar Elías Trabulse. In Los años finales de sor Juana: una interpretación (1688-1695), and in a second article published in 1999 titled La muerte de Sor Juana, Trabulse contests her conversion and abandonment of her studies. The records show that 180 books remained in her cell along with fifteen pages of sacred and profane writings. This proves what Paz believed, namely that Sor Juana never lost her lucid mind and strategically, in her despair, resorted to self-abnegation and mortification. She was undoubtedly affected by the dispossession, but I agree with Paz in that she maintained an ironic smile, moving "with ease at times with elegance, through dangerous and mined terrain".34
2.3. HER RECEPTION

Fig. 2.2 Two hundred Pesos bill displaying Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Banco de Mexico, 2003.

During her lifetime she was read and admired. However, like most writers, she was forgotten and for two hundred years remained fairly unknown in the continents she once was prevailed. It was not until the twentieth century that she became the subject of an increasing number of scholarly works. In 1940 a first modern edition of her completed works was published, and her literature became more accessible to a wider audience and to critical scholarship. Various Mexican poets edited her poetry and alluded to her metaphors within their own work. Octavio Paz, Nobel Prize laureate and the most important cultural critic of twentieth century Mexico taught a series of lectures on Sor Juana at Harvard University and in 1988 he dedicated a complete book-length study to her life and work titled Sor Juana or The Traps of Faith. Today a serious branch of scholars exists known as the Sor Juanistas and the list of recent publications and dissertations appears to be growing. Unlike Frida Kahlo, who has now been promoted to the cult status of a national icon in the visual arts and popular culture, Sor Juana's
reception is primarily based on her literary reputation as a Baroque writer and poet. And yet her cloistered life and intellectual stature have spawned at least one feature film and a small number of plays. Her portrait is now imprinted on the 200 Pesos bill issued by the Banco de Mexico. Arguably, she also served as a source of inspiration for some of the surreal dream-like paintings by Remedios Varo (1913-1963), especially those portraits depicting a solitary woman figure in a cell preoccupied with strange scientific experiments (See Fig. 2.6).

2.4. Motifs—I Dream of Sor Juana

Piramidal, funesta, de la tierra
nacida sombra, al Cielo encomiaba
de vanos obeliscos punta altiva,
estar pretention las Estrellas;
si bien sus luces bellas
--exentas siempre, siempre rutilantes -
la tenebrosa Guerra
que con negros vapores le intimidaba
la pavorosa sombra fugitive

5

Burlaban tan distantes,
que su ateazado ceño
al superior convexo aún no llegaba
del orbe de la Diosa
que tres veces Hermosa

5

con tres hermosos rostros ser ostenta,
quedando sólo dueño
del aire que empañaba
con el aliento denso que exhalaba;
y en la quietud contenta

10

de imperio silencioso,
somáticas sólo voces consentía
de las noxturnas aves,
tan obscuras, tan graves
que aun el silencio no se interrumpe

15

A shadow born of Earth,
bleak pyramid, vain obelisk,
pretending to scale Heaven
pointed to the stars;
whose undiminished brightness
beyond the assailing gloom
so scoured from distant heights
the shadow's dreadful flight
that under its clouded brow -
suspended at the sphere
of the three three-faced Goddess Moon,
thrice beautifully graced -
in their own denseness were contained
the vapors it exhaled:
a fullness of response
in Sleep's silent domain
allowing but faint trills
of furtive night birds, aired
in tones so dark and grave
as to leave silence unimpaired

20

The beginning of Sor Juana's *Primero Sueño* (First Dream) evokes a scenery of space, color, sound, and contrasting metaphors of place and time. Within the range of a few lines she sets a tone of darkness that is ambiguously linked to her obsession with silence as a key trope for knowledge. In the poem, the unspeakable refers to a Gnostic truth associated with the female principles of wisdom and intelligence (as in her reference to the “three-faced Goddess Moon”) that can only be found beyond one’s reason.

I was directly attracted to Sor Juana’s exuberant weaving of language. Endless sentences hover and linger, suspended like the sound of poems sung by Laurie Anderson; they have no resolution and continue to compound the surface of rhetoric with conceits, puns, and mythological allusions. I can feel that underneath the flow of words there is this tremendous pleasure Sor Juana experiences in inventing complex figures and incarnations of (female) intellection, and in this respect it is no surprise to find her claiming, in *La Respuesta*, that the *Primero Sueño* was the only work she had ever written for her own pure pleasure. But her fervent intellectual search, which I see reflected in her writings and her pursuit of science, philosophy, theatre, painting and music, points to a much more complicated relationship with pleasure and the exorbitant postures of her rhetorical language.

In creating the Sor Juana character for *Sueño*, I decided to select scholars, such as Octavio Paz, Margo Glantz, Antonio Alatorre, and Electa Arenal, that would support and lead me to stronger choices regarding my impression of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. After reading her work I imagined this historical figure as an incessantly curious intellectual character, with a ferocious hunger for knowledge, defiant and compulsive in nature, cruel and self-inflictive in personality. As an intellectual, she used language to come to terms
with her own human existence. She attempted to answer primordial questions such as: Where does one come from? How are the present and the future determined? How reliable are one's thoughts in creating a meaningful reality? Also she must have pondered on other more personal preoccupations in regards to the embodiment of emotional and physical needs.

It is remarkable how Sor Juana was able to exercise her right to self-expression within the confines of her readership, a privileged and dreadful group (the Archbishop, the Inquisitors, the intelligentsia) that not only praised her genius, but also inspected and censured her voice and printed work. Even though her literature belongs to the Baroque period, her existential ponderings are more akin to the eighteenth century Enlightenment Era where the objective was not contemplation, but of an active pursuit of knowledge. According to Paz, her Primero Sueño describes a "vertigo of being on the edge of the infinite hovering on the heights of her mental pyramid of conceits, the soul finds that what opens before it is a bottomless abyss. [...] The soul stands alone, not before God, but before the nameless and limitless space". 36 Seventy-six years before Kant formulated it, Sor Juana's poem prefigured his description of the Sublime, an extreme juxtaposition of ecstasy and terror when confronted with one's one finality and incomprehension. 37

Following her Primero Sueño, I decided to attribute Sor Juana's attraction to the Sublime with her need to position herself within a context that was far more complicated and larger than her own. It must have frustrated her that her genius had no match and was beyond everyone's comprehension. In order to stimulate her intellectual growth, Sor Juana could only challenge herself by attempting to apprehend Nature's paradoxes. Only
here, did Sor Juana allow herself to be dwarfed, in order to have enough room to soar to higher levels of conceptualization. She is neither a pure mystic nor a romantic poet. *Primero Sueño* does not fall along the visionary or prophetic traditions; it is an ambitious worthwhile risk in which knowing becomes an act of transgression, regardless if it fails to expose a godly revelation. As Paz explains, it is more akin to the new science of Cusanus, Kircher and their heretic counterparts such as Bruno, Kepler and Galileo. *Primero Sueño* evokes a universe that is infinity and lacks a cosmic center. It suggests a plurality of inhabited worlds "where everything is center and all is circumference."\(^\text{38}\) First, with an intuitive upward impulse, Sor Juana launches off like a philosophical rocket, and attempts to arrive at the Truth through hermetic traditions.\(^\text{39}\) After failing to uncover the hidden secrets of human phenomena through this approach, Sor Juana follows a systematic Aristotelian method of careful observation and study. Like an empirical Neo-platonist, she examines nature’s rationality but fails once more in ascertaining whether its imperceptible harmony; like that of a chambered nautilus, has underlying mathematical formulas that generate its structural perfection.

![Chambered Nautilus](image)

Fig. 2.3 The chambered nautilus or *nautilus* suggested perfect harmony because it could grow infinitely without ever altering its form.
After reading Gary Zukav’s *The Dancing Wu Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics* (New York: Bantam Books, 1980.) I found a strong correlation between Sor Juana’s view of infinity and our modern principles of quantum mechanics. Sor Juana wrote a treatise to simplify musical rules titled *El caracol*, its title signifying that harmony is not a circle, but an infinite chambered spiral. At the quantum level, Zukav describes a fascinating cosmos that surpasses human comprehension. In *Sueño* I structured metaphors based on several laws of physics to suggest that Sor Juana was tapping into concepts way beyond her time. For example, in Scene 1 when Sor Juana challenges the audience to predict the direction in which her hand will move, I am alluding to the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle in which it is impossible to penetrate deep into matter because the picture of nature becomes "blurred and there is no way to reclarify that part without blurring another part of the picture." However this "fuzziness" is not due to our clumsy measuring devices, but to the nature of the phenomena itself."  

In Scene 6, Maria Luisa’s seduction, I wanted Sor Juana, the rational intellectual to experience desire as a perplexing violation. Her body assaults her mind and assumes control. She can not resist sullied fantasies because her physical matter is exposed to a steady stream of emotional waves coming from the object of desire. These waves split Sor Juana’s reality into many worlds. As in the Copenhagen Interpretation, Sor Juana "collapses" generating an endlessly proliferating number of possibilities.  

In the last scene, Sor Juana lives within a quantum mechanical world that is infinite and multiple. She can perceive many renderings of herself, but cannot determine which one she occupies. She lacks a center, and therefore cannot ascertain a fixed position. Like a true
skeptic, she concludes that, in fact, perfect geometry can never encompass one's subjective reality because it is composed out of a complex weave of self reflections, echoes and correspondences. Professor Steven Lehar of Harvard University hypothesizes in his essay "Plato's Cave and the Nature of Visuospatial Perception," that "if you can perceive it, then it cannot possibly be real, but only a reflection of reality, like the shadows on the wall of Plato's cave, it is a construct of our brain [...] the coordinates of the perceptual world are not at all aligned with those of the objective world, but rather they define a separate and disconnected reality."^42

The Sor Juana character in Sueño lives by the Cartesian^43 belief: She thinks; she exists. This certain, so long as it is put forward by her or conceived in her mind. Sor Juana believes in a dualist nature where the senses generate an impoverished representation of her real physical world. In her Primero Sueño, Sor Juana contemplated herself to be a limited vaso, a vessel incapable of going beyond herself and comprehending the totality of Truth. The only possible way to embrace Truth would be to completely immerse herself in its abstraction. Of course, this would be impossible since the self's physical bond to the body would prevent such a noble aspiration. However, in Sueño, it is possible. The fictional Sor Juana does not awaken from a dream, but rather is immersed in the ultimate Truth. She ruptures through her paradigm and is able to envision herself outside her own history. She inhabits in a spiraling labyrinth of abstractions. She becomes what she has dreamt, an epitome of the perfect form, a caracol, a nautilus shell that is forever incomplete and consequently ascendant in nature. In her ascent Sor Juana transforms herself into an anamorphic^44 construction—a distorted illusion that can experience the unfolding of Time in an unmediated way^45, that hears the
silent "music written for angels." Sor Juana, in one of her poems to Maria Luisa
confesses that she aspires to write music for angels with the piece she titled El Caracol.
This work has never been found.

In the fictional world of the play, Sueño, I imagine Sor Juana creating a poetic
mythology the results of which are highly torturous and self-inflictive. By suppressing
the body and abstaining from her physical needs (food, sleep, sex) she is able to afford
the concentration of energy to support her excessive mental production. It is not
uncommon to subjugate the body in order to reach an ideal. Even today thousands of us
compulsively preoccupy ourselves with our physical image and alter its contours in order
to project an approximation of our imagined selves perhaps for less noble reasons. In Sor
Juana's hierarchical society in which race and birth "determined name and rank, the basis
of social order, learning became the surest recourse against misfortune of plebeian or
illegitimate birth". Even though her maestros, her "mute books" consisted only of male
authors, in her plea to study, Sor Juana constructs a personal ancestry of illustrious
women. These Pagan and Christian legendary figures bestowed upon her legitimacy, an
entitlement to cultivate her mind. According to Sor Juana the mind was feminine in
nature. Not only was "wisdom" attributed to a Greek goddess, Sophia, but its Gnostic
roots ennoia ("thought") and epinoia ("idea") were feminine in gender.
In Sueño, I have Sor Juana testify that the poems she wrote to Maria Luisa, the Countess of Paredes were “immaculate conceptions.” I based this choice on Sor Juana’s radical reinterpretation of the Virgin Mary. In her Villancicos de Asunción, she claims that Mary’s prowess is due to her ability to conceive immaculately. She is "todo lo que no es ser Dios/She is All except God." This allegation makes Mary the closest one to God, consequently subordinate to no one but Him. Her womb is a paradigm of perfection, a paradoxical space of discontinuity where the sealed vessel engenders and gives birth without ever being fractured. Likewise, the Sor Juana character treasures virginity in that it holds the potential for perfection. In Scene 6, as she venerates Maria Luisa’s strands of hair, she admits that the Countess’ penetrating beauty was beyond her own understanding. She then confides how Maria Luisa’s seductive essence threatened Sor
Juana’s virginal state. She describes how she resisted the seduction by holding her breath. As she attempted to defend her sense of self, she fantasizes taking a knife and stabbing the Countess. I based some of the images on the description Lavrin gives of an ancient painting where the Catholic virtue of virginity is venerated and forever exalted. In the image, a virgin is shown dressed in steel. On her left hand she holds a mass of her own hair, symbolizing that no lascivious strand of thought remains on her head. On her right hand she holds a knife, symbolizing her valor to defend Mary’s Immaculate Conception. Her eyes are closed and her mouth open. She takes five breaths and out come five luminous stars directed towards the heavens. Underneath lies the following inscription: "Spiritus eius repleabit Caelos". 51 Scene 6 concludes Sor Juana’s fantasy with her inability to penetrate Maria Luisa, for she has transformed into “an impervious void, a desert.”

Influenced by philosophical beliefs, the Sor Juana character does not aspire to incarnate or make love to a female body, but rather to transcend its physical limitations. Even though she denies that gender is an obstacle, her patriarchal society serves as a constant reminder. I support this statement based on Sor Juana’s response to a Peruvian gentleman’s suggestion that she should become a man. Sor Juana writes: “I have no knowledge of these things; except that I came to this place [the convent] so that, if true that I am female, none substantiate that state […] I will never be a woman who as a wife may serve a man. I know only that my body, not to either state inclined, is neuter, abstract, guardian of only what my soul consigns” 52
For Sor Juana, the body is an untouchable object of knowledge, only visible through a mirror reflection of itself. Because the soul is sexless, love and intimacy can be enjoyed through contemplation and sublimation of her sexuality. In her erotic poems to the Vicereine Maria Luisa, the Countess of Paredes, she employs metaphors and rhetorical figures to express the faithfulness of an impassioned lover and the loyalty of an appreciative subject. Her imagination doubles her pleasure because it takes in the object of desire first with the eyes, then with the spirit. "The desired body becomes a ghost, the ghost an unreachable presence". By physically possessing the beloved, the platonic Sor Juana would offend not only Maria Luisa's honor but her own as well. Therefore, following Octavio Paz’s interpretation, it became my decision to solely present the facts and leave Sor Juana’s relationship with the Countess as inconclusive. Maria Luisa was an intimate friend, perhaps her lover, and most definitely her protector. It is to her that we owe the survival of Sor Juana’s work. It is certain, according to Paz, that the Countess hand-carried her manuscript to Spain and assumed the cost of the printing. I represent this when at the end of Scæae 6, Maria Luisa takes Sor Juana’s manuscripts and promises to publish her work.

On the spiritual level one may think that she entered the convent to avoid the "common horrors" and to defend her virgin virtue, however, in Scene 7, of Sueño she reminds Father Antonio that she entered the convent for more practical reasons -- to dedicate herself to her work as a writer. After reading, George Bataille, Erotism: Death and Sensuality, I became interested in his theory of how humans feel compelled to submit sex to certain restrictions because it interferes with work. Work is what separates the human being from the beast. In her pursuit to supersede even her humanity, Sor Juana
works compulsively. During Scene 6, Sor Juana experiences what Bataille calls our primary desire -- a violent pull to reach beyond one's self, to lay hold of intelligence. If the sexual fascination of temptation "has its fullest radiance, its beauty is so great that the religious is still enraptured by it. But [s]he trembles too. The halo of death makes its beauty hateful." The main function of a taboo is to combat aggression. Sensing her boundaries altered, Sor Juana interrupts the transgression because she feels under attack.

Her loss of patronage and the loss of her library present the unexpected crisis that I try to examine in my play. In my re-enactment of Sor Juana, I want to capture her struggle for knowledge and self-expression not only in relation to a patriarchal structure, but most importantly in confrontation to her own image. From her paradoxical cell, Sor Juana managed to spiral outwards. Initially, the enclosed space did not imprison her, but functioned like a Remedios Varo interior, as a laboratory for her literary imagination.

Fig. 2.5 Remedios Varo, Creación de las aves, 1957.

I see her cell like a caracol, a chambered shell, which like an architectural and mythological emblem seemed to provide Sor Juana the means to a perfect ascent. Using
this metaphor, in *Sueño* I suggest that after the crisis her haven is shattered and transformed into an empty timeless shell. I aspired to achieve what Paz describes in regards to the *caracol* -- a space that unfolds movement resembling a "house of echoes" and to music as "geometry made sound". Her collection of books comprised her perfect geometry of thought. Her cell was not a room of her own, in Virginia Woolf's modern phrase. Her historical context and predicament placed her in a distinctly public role which made her more vulnerable than she knew. Her cell was a library and an echo-chamber of her ideas, encouraged by her intimate friend Maria Luisa, the aristocratic elite and her many admirers and scrutinized by her Father Confessor and eventually completely censured by the Church.

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1 The name "New Spain" refers to modern day Latin America during the time of conquest and domination by the Spanish crown.

2 Paz 2.

3 Paz 2.


5 This letter dated February 1691 was found in 1982 in Madrid. The author of the letter calls herself Sor Serafina de Cristo and states that she resides in the St. Jerome convent. However after serious research, the convent's records do not account for anyone under such name. Judging from the letter's content (a mocking allegory in response to Sor Juana's censorship) some scholars, like Elías Trabulse in *El enigma de Serafina de Cristo: acerca de un manuscrito inédito de Sor Juan Inés de la Cruz*, 1691 (Toluca, México: Instituto Mexiquense de Cultura, 1995) believe that it was written by the defiant Sor Juana herself.

7 Sor Juana de la Cruz. Enigmasy ofrecidos a la casa del placer. ed. Antonio Alatorre. (México: El Colegio de Mexico, 1994).

8 Criollo means someone of Spanish blood, yet born in New Spain. In other words, according to Paz "a victim of ambiguity" because s/he is both privileged and marginalized.

9 Although Sor Juana uses the last name “Asbaje”, the presumed father’s last name is referred to as “Asuaje”.

10 "defectos de natales" was the term used to describe bastard children or those born of unmarried unions. It was possible to absolve a child from her birth defect by legitimizing her. But this process was costly because it could only be done in Spain. Cf. Asunción Lavrin, Sor Juana y su mundo: una mirada actual, ed. by Sara Poot Herrera (México: Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana, Instituto de Investigaciones de la Cultura, 1995) 40.

11 See Paz’s chapter “The Dias and the Pulpit” 24-35.

12 Lavrin 40.

13 Paz 31-32.

14 Lavrin 77.

15 Lavrin 90.

16 In his impressive critical book on Sor Juana, Octavio Paz offers a description of what her cell must have looked like: "The restoration currently in progress has revealed that the two floors that usually made up one cell...were joined by an interior stairway. Each nun arranged her cell according to her taste and in keeping with her means [. . .] Her cell was on the southeast corner of the cloister, at the corner of Monserrate and Verde Streets. There is a large window in the room on the second floor, so that on clear days, which most were, Sor Juana could see the Valley of Mexico and the two volcanos of her childhood." Cf. Paz 28.

17 A practitioner of conceptismo - a seventeenth century literary style prevalent in Spain, characterized by its reliance on wit, cleverness and word play. Cf. Paz 512.

18 Paz 57.

19 See Paz’s chapter "A Transplanted Literature" 44-59.

20 The Holy Office was responsible for administering the Inquisition.

21 Alatorre 12-14.


23 Alatorre 12.

24 Paz sees her writings as related to the Conceptista Baroque subgenre, which uses conceit to appeal to the intellect. It is characterized by its "paradoxical, philosophical and markedly intellectual" language. 512.

25 Paz 4.
26 "A poem in short lines in the manner of the songs sung by peasants; in Sor Juana's time, of a sequence of lyrics composed to be sung at matins on a religious holiday" Paz 514. "Between 1676 and 1691 Sor Juana wrote twelve complete sets of villancicos, each composed of eight, nine or more lyrics. She also composed thirty-two lyrics for the dedication of the church of the nuns of San Bernardo, three for the Holy day of Our Lady, four for the Incarnation, two for the Nativity, and four for a nun's profession. In addition to all these there are another ten sets of villancicos that can be attributed to her [...] In all she wrote two hundred and thirty-two of these poems. [...] Finally, there is a geographical range: she did not limit herself to writing for the Mexico City Cathedral and to other churches in that city; she wrote nine series for the cathedral in Puebla and one for the Oaxaca cathedral." Paz 312. "Sor Juana emits various voices and defines distinct levels of theological understanding and social and racial situation [...] she permits the representation of different castes [...] includes those marginalized, driving forward a popular discourse towards the divine." Cf. Margo Glantz, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: saberes y placeres (Toluca, Estado de México: Gobierno del Estado de México, Instituto Mexiquense de Cultura, 1996) 36-37, my translation.

27 It was called an auto sacramental.

28 It was called a saínete.

29 The Spanish ballad, in octosyllabic meter with alternate assonant rhyme; generally narrative in content. Paz 513.

30 A stanza form of ten octosyllabic lines, with a pause after the fourth. Paz 512.

31 A brief theatrical piece plays as a prologue to a principle play, often in praise of visiting or newly arrived dignitaries or for royal anniversaries. Paz 513.

32 Paz 312.

33 Contradicting Saint Augustine, who believed that God's greatest fineza, expression of love was Christ's death, Vieyra believed God's greatest fineza was His absence because it was more painful and loving. To the opinion offered by Saint Thomas, that the greatest fineza was remaining with man via the Eucharist, Vieyra states that greater was Christ giving up his senses to transubstantiate into the host itself. To the opinion of Saint John Crisostomo, that the greatest fineza was having washed the feet of His disciples, he adds that the fineza was not the act itself, but the motivation behind the act. He then offers what he supposes is God's greatest fineza—his unconditional and deferred love. God asks that men not correspond to his love and instead for them to love one another as He has loved them. Sor Juana offers her own opinion to the matter stating that it is God's negative favors which are His greatest gifts. Since God's nature is to love, then not showing it is a greater sacrifice for Him. However he restrains Himself in order for man to execute his/her free will and consequently be less indebted to God.

34 Paz 127.

35 However, her poems were edited and often published in other books or as part of larger anthologies. Her work as a complete unit was last reprinted in 1725.

36 Paz 359.

37 Immanuel Kant, Critique of Aesthetic Judgement trans. by James Creed Meredith (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1911) In his Critique, Kant describes the difference between the beautiful and the sublime. He states that beauty in nature consists on the object's limitation of form. When an observer is taken by something beautiful, her/his senses are fully engaged. The sublime, however, can only be experienced by the mind, a mind that is in awe. The sublime transcends the senses and challenges the observer's intellect because it is
Page 38 does not exist.

55 Cf. Paz, p. 246-47. At the end of the chapter, "The Reflection, the Echo," Paz speculates on Sor Juana's interest in music, the Neoplatonic philosophy of correspondences and the idea of harmony, observing that music is like a starry sky that we hear but not see.
CHAPTER 3

THE SCRIPT, AN EVOLVING BLUE PRINT

In May 2002 I was notified that three out of the four grant proposals I had submitted to the university had been approved. This would give me a total of $3900 to complete the field research and production of the new work. The generous support came from THE GRADUATE SCHOOL (Alumni Grant for Graduate Research & Scholarship--$2000), THE DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN’S STUDIES (The Coca Cola Critical Difference for Women Grant for Research on Women, Gender and Gender Equity--$1000) and THE CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES (Tinker Foundation Field Research Award--$900).

I spent two months in Mexico City in a "creative mode" allowing myself to be influenced, affected, and opened to anything that came my way. When I begin a new work I have nothing, only a disposition to be attentive and notice what seems to cry out, what urges to be expressed. So I remained open and "superstitious" by reading anything as a sign, a seed, a suggestion of a larger event. This is how I have approached the creation of my previous works. I read and saturate myself with information that I find inspiring, usually from the sciences. For Between the Places, I investigated plant behavior in regards to pollination; for Migbot, I studied chirality theory in relation to the origin of life, and for MIRAK, I investigated chaos theory and was inspired by the conceptual implications of entropy. After reading Sor Juana’s Primero Sueño I found her
interest in perceptions of reality to be very thought-provoking. I started to read about quantum motion. I dreamt of its applications: a world of uncertainty, of probabilities, in which each player is illogically dual, present and influential, and yet nonlocal, and atemporal.

Prior to departing for Mexico in the summer of 2002, I only had a skeletal narrative based purely on Sor Juana’s Primero Sueño. I used this preliminary draft to set some parameters in regards to the various video shoots. By the end of the summer I completed a script which I titled Ave, maris stella. This first script although interesting to me, was lifeless. No one, except my mother found it compelling. Difficult to admit, but Ave, maris stella was indeed a trite epic, totally conceptual and presumptuous. It lacked dramatic action and it was more like a series of existential ponderings, surreal scenarios to explore Sor Juana’s metaphysical interests. When I proposed my thesis project I had envisioned a performance installation in which images, soundscapes and my physical interaction with these would tell the odd dream. I planned the Mexico film-shoots with this idea in mind. So when I came back to Columbus, I had gathered approximately three hours of dream-like, surreal footage. When I began to translate Ave, maris stella I realized that once in English the text seemed corny and uninteresting. The inherent symbolism could only be meaningful to a Latino audience familiar with Sor Juana or scholars knowledgeable of her work.

I feverishly worked on the second script version. It was difficult since I had to resist thinking of my compiled footage and having the script comply with it. The pressure remained present to produce a multimedia piece throughout the entire writing process. This was after all the reason why I had been given the grants. Fortunately, I had the
support and critical guidance of Johannes Birringer, my artistic collaborator and Maureen Murphy, my thesis advisor. I had the best of both worlds. Birringer's work emphasizes abstract, non-linear narratives, while Murphy is experienced with staging traditional dramas. With both their assistance I was able to write a script that had the dramatic clarity, but also allowed for abstraction and justified media integration.

The entire writing process took approximately six weeks. I began by formulating a series of 'unanswerable' prompt questions. For me this step is most critical to the creation of a new work. Perhaps because I believe that the stage is a shared space, I have an extreme aversion to theatrical works that impose on an audience 'moralistic statements' or 'personal testimonials'. I believe that I can only serve as an artist if I can elicit an interest to question. And I can only succeed in doing so, if I can recognize that I honestly do not have the answers. The questions do not have to be deep and philosophical to be moving. I find magicians extremely moving and attractive. They keep me engaged, wondering: How is the irrational illusion constructed? How is it possible that I honestly believe the illusion to be real? This is the type of dialogue I hope to inspire with an audience.

With Sueño I consistently asked myself the following primary questions. Why was it so important for Sor Juana to question? If there is an irrevocable Truth, what could it have been for Sor Juana? How did Sor Juana experience intimacy? Why was she attracted to silence and isolation? Cloaked always by a layered religious habit, how did Sor Juana relate to her body? How did she identify with her collection of books? How did she experience her trial and dispossesssion? Being a woman that always sought for meaning in all things, how did she reason this act of violence?
During the second step of the process I created a rough outline that would tell Sor Juana's story in terms of critical life events: learning to read and write at the age of three, abstaining from cheese and shaving her head, confronting forty scholars to prove her worth and genius, entering the convent, becoming a celebrity figure, having Maria Luisa publish her work, elucidating on the concept of God's love in her published essay, reacting to the scandal, refusing to repent for transgression, dismissing her confessor, defending her right to an intellectual life of learning.

Since I would be the only performer on stage, it was challenging to find interesting ways to provide exposition via dramatic tension. What exacerbated the challenge was the fact that Sor Juana is practically unknown in the United States. How to establish why she was so fascinating and not be bogged down by excessive detailing of her life story? The only way I could think of revealing Sor Juana in a captivating manner was by promoting a tension within her. The tension would stem from her compulsion to question everything at all costs. This would then become her tragic flaw—what first brings her glory and later doom. I thought of eliciting the character's transformation by establishing her identification to the central motif, a chambered nautilus. Her obsession with the creature would allude to her deeper preoccupations, that of immortality and sovereignty.
3.1. THE FINAL SCRIPT VERSION OF SUEÑO

SUEÑO

written by Angeles Romero

Preshow

Last two minutes before curtain call ---Houselights to 20%.
MUSIC Prelude track 01 fade out to silence.
(Black out. Actress comes out)

Scene 1

VIDEO 1 Underwater Hand/Nautilus
MUSIC Track 2 Caracol_01

SJ stands behind aquarium, scoops water and takes it to her face. She then notices something at the water. She reaches in and pulls out a nautilus. SJ takes it into her hand, scrubs the shell with a brush, examines it closely and discovers a long scroll in its inside. Excited she returns to her cell. Behind her desk she carefully examines the scroll attempting to decipher its code. Then she has an 'aha!' moment.
(Black out.)

I am an infant. (A square of light, grows in the center. She steps into the scene.) It is night time. I am lying in my cradle, more like a coffin without a lid. All around, the frame is too high. (She looks to the side and sees a woman.) Perhaps she will come close.
(Pause while she waits.)

No (She turns back to infant and examines her conditions.) My perspective is so limited. (She looks up into the ceiling.) All I can see is a flat silhouette on the upper part of the wall. As it moves its head spills into the ceiling. What is it doing? (As she speaks she immitates action in slow stylized motion.) It is a continuous action. (Pause.) I am tired, but I cannot sleep. (She looks up again, stares at silhouette.)

There it is! (Video plays the shadow.)

VIDEO 2 Striking Shadow
(SJ moves to the side, miming that the woman has walked to cradle and has begun to strike the infant. Then the woman returns to corner to continue sewing.) Ah, how interesting, of course the shadow did not exist by itself; it is attached to her. She was much smaller. But with the light from the candle she can change her size and her shape.

(Pause.) There, she sat in that corner and sewed, immersed in deep thoughts. As long as I kept still and quiet, I could join her. In the same room, like two islands united by an ocean of silence. (Video plays the inspired hand writing against the sun. Sor Juana crosses to table.)

**VIDEO 3 Shore Walk, Writing Hand**

(Sor Juana writes at the table. Her hand drifts off the page. She comes to a stop as she holds the quill up in the air. She catches herself right before it stains her habit. She carefully places the quill back on the desk and examines her stained fingers. Then she looks up and notices she has company).

Only in isolation can one study one’s self. You may think this is naive, for true isolation is never possible. You are quite right, the universe is a closed box, and we are all trapped in it for good; of course, my enclosure is more obvious than yours, since I am not allowed to leave this convent. It has been over 20 years.

Even here, there is much to see. I can decide what corners of the box to explore.

(Goes to center light area, outstretched hand.)

Unless I bring light to an area, all possibilities are in limbo. The moment I decide to point the candle in a particular direction, there, the object appears, it is a hand and its shadow enables you to locate its position. You feel safe, certain, because you now know the hand’s position in the space, however, the mystery continues because you will never be able to predict the direction in which it will move. You will never be certain.

(Showing this.)
As you observe my hand you know nothing of its nature, it exposes itself to you according to your method of questioning. What do you want to know about this hand? (Hand travels.) Its texture? Its warmth? Its history? Do you want to know whom it has harmed? Whom it has longed to touch? How it has been punished? (Pause.) You will never know anything, anything except that it has written incessantly since the age of three. It would be painful for it to ever stop writing.
Scene 2

(Shift to Confessionary. SJ sits on aquarium/confessional bench.)
Reverend Father Antonio, why can you not stop the inquisition? I beg you, please intervene on my behalf. Tell them it is ludicrous to put me on trial over the insignificant essay that I wrote. It was purely rhetorical, an intellectual exercise. Not to be taken seriously. I never intended any quarrels with the Holy Office. I am certainly not a heretic.

All this is ridiculous. The Bishop of Puebla himself requested that I write it. I agreed under the condition that he would not publish it. Of course, I realized that to others it would seem a disproportionate arrogance especially coming from a woman. But, father how I should have refused him? By telling him that I was not capable of writing the essay? That would have been a lie. That I did not wish to write it? That would have been disobedience. That I did not know how? They did not ask me more than I knew. To refuse would be a gross ingratitude to those who honored me by believing that an ignorant woman would know how to do what such brilliant minds solicited. So I had no choice but to obey.

According to the Bishop, Father Vieyra had exceeded himself by refuting the opinions of three of our Holy Saints. He told me that God had chosen me as a ‘frail instrument’ to punish the orator’s pride. Yes, it is ironic, that by intending to defend the Saints, in the process I happened to pose an alternative argument not only superior to Vieyra’s, but also to the Saints as well.

(Light shift) (She goes downstage, addressing the audience.) The essay discussed God’s greatest demonstration of love. I only had three options, his incarnation, his crucifixion or his physical transformation into the host itself. What would you have said? You do not have an opinion...well, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, always has an opinion and I said ‘none of the above’.

A demonstration of love comes at great COST to the giver and at great UTILITY to the receiver. For example, if she just crossed the desert and now comes to you begging for water, and you give her a cup of water. Then your gesture has great utility to her, but it did not come at great cost to you. She may then interpret your action as deep love, and you may even believe that it was, but in fact you are under the spell of your own self importance in relation to her. On the other hand, if you go out on a hunt and endangered your life to offer her a buffalo, and she welcomes the gift, but since she does not eat meat she will have to feed it to the dogs. Then your act gave her no utility, but it had great cost to you, and therefore only served you. You may then justify your excessiveness as a deep love for her, when indeed it was a misplaced effort in your part.

So, following this rationale, God’s greatest demonstration of love could only have been his depriving us from his love, because that is what cost him the most; he went against his own nature, which is presumably to love? (Pause.)
And the great utility that comes out of this negation would be that our faith would have to necessarily be strengthened in order for our God's existence to continue.

(*She crosses to desk's front.*) Now, the Eucharist would be God's greatest demonstration of love, if you believe, like the Catholic doctrine tells you that the actual body of Christ IS the bread itself, regardless of who handles the bread. This sacrament is metaphorically, the most poetic construction, but it is silly to think that it is more than a representation. I admit, it would be far more romantic to think that one could literally ingest God's presence, his goodness and assure immortality. How beautiful to think that it could be possible to have him plunge into our abysmal core and cleanse us of all of this, by simply taking him into our mouths and savoring the purgative like the sweetest nectar. Leave that to the peasants and their crude superstitions. You know the truth is far more complicated.

**VIDEO 4 Father Antonio Reprimand**

Father Antonio does not move. He does not come here to negotiate, but to impose a holy prescription to save my soul from perdition.

*Father Antonio:* (Video sound/voice over.) "You must stop questioning, Sor Juana. Only prayer and mortification will grant you wings."

(*12 Count then Sor Juana snaps and video freezes into a close up of Father Antonio's face. She examines it.*)

He has a rather large head, does he not? So often he holds it low like a waning moon. But, now the moon is full and facing front. Look, he studies me from a large distance. I cannot determine what he would do. But does he not have a disproportional forehead. Or, maybe it is his lack of hair. No, it is not an optical illusion. There is no denial, his geometrical form is a bit perverse. (*She snaps once more the video image unfreezes and runs its course.*)

(*She looks at her hand.*) How is the human form determined? (*She strikes her left fist with her right hand several times.*) Is it by chance, by being tossed around by impulses, like stones in a river or (*She reaches for a leaf lying on top of her desk.*) is it by potentialities inherent in a fixed plan of infinite precision, like with sacred emblems? Christ adopted a simple, yet beautiful geometry. A cross, two intersecting vectors, and out of the vertex a thorny bleeding rose was born. Very appealing.

Pause

I do not think Father Antonio is in touch with a harmonious design. The same goes for most of the sisters here. They grow fat and ugly. They think that because we wear habits, one can not tell. But I can tell. 

Pause
They are all jealous of me. Ironically, it's not because I am brilliant. They do not possess the intellectual capacity to appreciate my intellect and draw a comparison. They are envious of me because I am attractive. The most dignified and illustrious men come here to visit me. Not only because I please them with philosophical discourse. Rather, they are addicted to my presence. Some of them can not even follow my arguments. They look perplexed, but not frustrated. More like dazzled and satisfied to watch me develop my thoughts. I have become an object of their contradiction. You can imagine why. Still, they can not help themselves and they flood me with gifts—the most unimaginative bring me candy, which I give away immediately. However, others with better judgment bring jewelry, that I sell, and books, instruments which I keep dearly.

Scene 3

**Music Track 3 OneBell_03a**

*Cloister bell rings. Sor Juana is besides her desk.*

I am not vain. Vain women do not shave their heads. And I have shaven this head for 25 years. But I started cutting it long before then. I had long beautiful thick hair all the way down to my waist. It was the longest it had ever been.

*(She goes stage left to the hanging books.)*

At this point I realized that if I were to cut it, I would never see what its maximum potential growth could be, *(Demonstrates with habit length.)* since everyday it would grow longer than I had ever had it in my entire life. But what great accomplishment would that be? Instead, after a dream that I had, I began to utilize it as a marker for my learning. *(She signals her books.)* I would cut 6 inches, set some goals and if the hair grew faster than my learning, then I would cut off more length. So you can imagine that throughout my adolescent years it remained fairly short. *(Pause, she returns to her desk, notices a bowl with olives, picks up one and this triggers the next thought.)* *(She walks into center stage.)*

The hair cutting was accompanied by a strict abstinence from cheese. In the same dream, I thought God had spoken to me. Silly, but I will tell it to you anyway.

I was alone in the kitchen hiding underneath the table. I was eating cheese and olives obsessively. Then Christ walked in and stood next to the table. I knew it was him, because I could see the stigmata on his feet. Then he spoke directly into my head. "Stop eating the cheese. The cheese is bad for you. It dulls your senses and it will make you stupid. If you want to know everything there is to know, then you must give it up?" I slowly placed the plate next to his feet. He picked up the pieces of cheese and left the olives behind. Then he walked out. I reached out for the olives and as an after thought he added, "you will also have to give up your hair." *(pause)*
I was not attached to my hair, but I was very fond of cheese and olives due to my Spanish ancestry. Yet, since then no more cheese, and no more hair. *(She eats an olive.)*

I still indulge in olives. I still have necessities.

*(She becomes aware of her indulgence.)* I remember as a young girl seeing a female dog in heat. She attempted to escape from a pack of dogs. She was exhausted, but managed to leap up into the very top of the central fountain. The machos in their confusion began humping themselves. Only one waited for her to give up her position. He seemed to be in pain. The beast moaned, licked his raw member, it was seething and it jutted out. The bitch remained there throughout the entire day, soaking wet, shivering. She did not realize that her body had betrayed her, it emitted a scent that would eventually determine her fate. *(Mechanically she is about to take the rest of the olive to her mouth, but stops and decides not to consume it. She places the uneaten olive back in the bowl and turns to audience.)*

You see, creatures are shaped by their environments. Their existence has an interdependent function. If a creature fails to adapt to the environment, by let us say, not being capable of altering the color of its skin and therefore making it an easy prey or if its importance to others simply becomes obsolete, then its kind must face extinction. Just like that. Because according to the environment, its effort was arrogant and vain. It was unsuccessful and futile. It lacked worth because no one had use for it.

*(Takes the Nautilus to explain its structure.)* This is what happened to the caracol, the chambered nautilus. In the most profound depths of the sea, it withstood such pressure by ingeniously crafting a perfect spiraling shelter. Inside its chamber, *(She reaches for scroll and shows to audience.)* it kept a disciplined account of each day by engraving lines that never touched. When it ran out of space to write, it sealed the chamber and built a new one on top of the old one. Using its existing structure for support, the creature was only present in the last and largest chamber. So was its dedication to the work, that it transformed itself into a sacred being. It found sustainable means by assuming a position and a geometry in which it could change its scale without ever altering its ratio. It was a sovereign being, never needing to justify to anyone, never pausing at the fear of it recoiling upon itself. And for this reason, its kind ceased to exist. If the nautilus had a sacred form, why then did it become extinct?

*(Pause.)*

Extinction, of course is a taboo in our Church, but it happens nonetheless. Entire races are totally extinguished forever.

I am working on a musical treatment in its honor, titled *El Caracol*, after its name. *(Sor Juana walks with shell and scroll to aquarium box. She hides scroll under the step and places the shell back in the water.)*
VIDEO 5 Undersea Nautilus and Structure
MUSIC Track 4 CaracolSoft_03b

You do not care because it has nothing to do with you. But thousands died in the depths of the sea. They were not carried by angels to the surface, but by the trapped vapor of their decaying bodies. The shells are buried in our sand. But, this will never happen to you, because you have faith, correct? What makes you think you will be spared? No one has ever been spared. You will consume and consume and consume until one day you drop, and the only thing that will surface, provided that you have given it proper form is your work. (She crosses back behind desk, picks up a book.) Like an empty shell, your work will remind us of your presence in your absence. But you, you will no longer exist, only the work. (SJ walks around desk and returns to center of stage. She walks in a corridor of light).

Scene 4

VIDEO 6 Convent Walk

(From upstage with book in hand.) This is where I come from, my origins. Here is my family, my friends. Four thousand and eighty relatives inclining next to one another.

Here are those that I hold most dear: Padre Athanasius Kircher, next to him, Cusanos, then Vicenzo Cartari, Pietro Crinito, Macrobius, Giovanni Boccaccio, Pierre Gassendi, Baltasar de Vitoria. (in a whisper) Giordano Bruno, Nicholas Copernicus, Rene Descartes, Galileo. One space, many time frames.

(Points to a book.) This one is quite special, it is the only out of my collection that is totally made out of skin. Guess what it is? It is a handwritten bible. Three hundred lambs were slaughtered for their flesh-lining. If you look closely you can see the hair-markings. But we do not make paper like that anymore. We have changed…no…there must be a better word. (Pause) "evolved" yes, we have evolved since then.

(Takes another book, opens it, examines it.) Books age slowly. The misshapen letters like black tears dripped from melancholic feathers. The ink, once black now has rusted and turned brown. The sooty characters lay on the surface in code. The code generates shapes that appear soulless to the illiterate and the fundamentalist. They are mute, dead yet living in stillness because the maestros are present. Their thoughts continue unchanged, remembered, imagined, intensified. When I read them I can sense their presence. Not outside of me, but here inside like an inner pulse. Each author has his or her own personal signature which like a matrix assures the purity of a specific mixture of forms. Each author breeds a unique identity and their expression becomes a purification process. It is not enough to be literate. Reading is an intimate act. It takes a certain sensibility to experience its immediacy, to savor the inherent qualities. When I am in communion with

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a maestro, his thoughts exceed my expectations. I can sense his direction, the force behind every movement, how it curves, how it grows and decays in tone. Every gesture in silence is a sigh, a caress, a yawn. Nothing is fortuitous, every moment is a deliberate effort to eliminate all extraneous noise. Like with music.

**Music Track 5 Perfection_04**
(SJ listens to music, video shows individual manuscript pages fading into each other.)

One day, I will be among them. Transformed into paper. Out of boiled rags of cotton, I will be beaten to a creamy pulp, suspended in water, seaved and then put to out to dry. On thin sheets my sooty thoughts will also stain the surface.

**Scene 5**

After examining one of the poems that I wrote to the Maria Luisa, the Countess of Paredes. (**Light change to confessionary/locutorio.** **(SJ sits on waterbox.)** Father Antonio asked me if I ever touched myself. Father Antonio is not only my confessor, he is also my spiritual father. He evaluates my dreams, my thoughts, as well as my writings and then prescribes remedies. Everyone here is required to have one. So, he asked me if I touched myself. I answered that I did. Then he wanted to know where. I told him that I liked touching my bones when I stretch. Like this.

(She stands up to demonstrate, arcs back.)

I like to feel my pelvis, especially this part. And how it connects to the lower part of my spine. Also my clavicle and my scapula. It is fascinating to think that they only attach to the skeleton at this single point, here at the sternum. This is the reason why it can move freely up and down, like this. He was interested to know what I imagined when I touched myself. (**With her right hand she reaches back for an imaginary arrow and shoots up into the heavens. She makes the sound echo of it piercing several layers of heaven.** I told him that I thought of myself able to pierce the heavens, like an arrow stretching a bow. In absolute readiness, at extreme potential and power.

He forbade me to do this exercise and ordered that I double my food intake. (**Pause.** Why do you think he did this? Do you think he was actually afraid that I would be able to pierce the heavens? (**She extends her arms as if flying. Slowly turns and gives her back to audience. Then begins a passionate embrace.**)

**Video 7 Piercing Sky/Flames**

**Music Track 6 Voiceover_05**

"*del mismo corazon los combatientes deseos, son holocausto poluto, son materiales afectos, y solamente del alma en religiosos incendios, arde sacrificio puro de adoracion*

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y silencio. ser mujer, ni estar ausente, no es de amarte impedimiento; pues sabes tu, que las almas distanciam separan y sexo.

[Translation: Originating in the heart, desire, in discord and dissension, kindles tainted holocausts, fires of bodily affection, and only when born of the soul may the pure flame of consecration blaze brightly in religious fires of silence and of adoration. There is no obstacle to love in gender or in absence for souls, as you are well aware transcend both sex and distance.]

(end of voice over and film)

Scene 6

(Lighting shift to Cell)

The verses that I write to Maria Luisa are not perverse, they are immaculate conceptions. (Pause, she crosses to her desk and pulls out a box. She opens it carefully and pulls out strands of hair.) These golden strands belong to her, the Countess, my queen. For ten years, she came to see me. On her last visit, before returning to Spain she revealed herself to me.

Discretely within these confinements, she undressed before me.

VIDEO 8 Maria Luisa Temptation

Sor Juana: She wanted me to look at her. (She goes downstage to the empty seat in the front row. Takes microphone and continues.)

Maria Luisa: (voice over, video-sound) "Juana, I beg you to look at me."

Sor Juana: But, I could not look at her. Instead I focused on an ink stain on the floor. I failed to notice it before, and now it is too late to clean. It dried in an odd shape, not like a splatter of a fallen drop, but rather as if drawn like a careful design.

Maria Luisa: (voice-over, video-sound) "Juana, come to me."

(SJ gazes at the imaginary ink spot in front of her, as audience watches the film unfold.)

Music Track 7 Countess_06

Sor Juana: She was so beautiful. A type of beauty that is concrete, yet ethereal. I am unable to recognize it. Like light she pierces through my thoughts. I can not obstruct it because she comes in as waves. She is intense and intends to destroy me. The currents are blurring my boundaries. I continue
resisting. The essence distorts my senses. I feel light, I am falling upwards into her embrace. Now, I am splitting, generating exact editions of myself, like branches of single tree. Each one with a particular tendency. In one I want to worship her, yet in another I want to enslave her, to sully her. I smother her with my mouth. She yields without qualm. I am suspended, paralyzed. I gather my lowest impuise to escape it. Now I take the knife and stab her repeatedly. The wounds do not register. They are erased immediately, like sand shifted by the wind. She is an impervious void, a desert. In this immense sea the only recognizable marks I am able to leave behind are mobile evanescent signs, sinuous lines drawn by my momentum. How to perceive this void? How to name it? This is absurd. The ink stain on the floor. There it is, here I am.

"Déjeme!" (SJ abruptly enters the stage.)

(From here on all text is Voice Over from Video Sound. SJ gives her back to the audience. She then physically responds to the Countess by first reaching out to her with extended arms and then comforting back into a vulnerable and odd position.)

Maria Luisa: Do you love me?

Sor Juana: I do not know. I think that I love you.

Maria Luisa: What do the poems you wrote for me mean?

Sor Juana: It is poetry, Maria Luisa, filled with symbols of what I imagined you to be, of what I imagine myself to be. Their objective is to be convincing, not sincere. The subject that speaks to you in these poems only resembles me. It is a rendered copy. You are the soul of the poem, the body of its shade. If you mourn the absence of a soul in me, then confer me with a soul from the many you rendered. (Pause) Forgive me. I am not capable of being with you. (Pause.) If I am a woman, no one will ever verify it. This body is neuter, abstract. It will allow only what my being entrusts.

Maria Luisa: Give me your manuscripts.

(Sor Juana goes to her desk to get her manuscripts, then returns to the light spot now on floor, and places them there, facing audience)

Sor Juana: What will you do with them?

Maria Luisa: I will publish them.

Sor Juana: (Slowly she puts down the manuscripts on the floor.) This is all of me.
Maria Luisa: I know.

Sor Juana: Gracias (There is an overlap of 'Gracias', that which is spoken by the voice over and by the stage actor. Black out, except the very dim spot on the place now where there manuscripts lie remains on throughout the rest of play.)

Scene 7

MUSIC Track 3 OneBell_03a

(Sound of a bell triggers SJ to stand up and make a sharp turn as if walking through a corridor to arrive to the acquarium/confessionary bench.)

Father Antonio, you were once affectionate to me. I was sixteen. It was at the Royal Palace. The room was full of men. You were unlike the others. They came to witness a spectacle—a genius girl, unheard of. Forty scholars were invited to prove that I was not such a creature. They came prepared with difficult questions in all areas of study. As the experiment progressed, and I succeeded in answering to each of them, they became more aggressive in their manner. Five hours of interrogation. But I was not tired, their violence excited me. With each question, I became sharper, quicker, more precise. You sat across from me, never spoke, only observed the event. But, I sensed you secretly rooting for my advance. I felt assured. I knew that at any point you could intervene. Afterwards you took me to the side, "Juana Ines, you are a gifted child. This environment will hinder you. Trust in me, if you enter the convent, you will be under my full protection."

I told you that I was uncertain of my religious vocation. You promised me that the Church would grant me a space of my own where I could focus on my learning. The day I took the veil you yourself lit the altar candles. (He orders her to go to the side and pray. She attempts but can not bear to succumb to his orders.)

Padre Nuestro que estas en los cielos. Sanctificado sea tu nombre. Venga a nosotros tu reino. Hágase tu voluntad...no!

You promoted the visitations, you profited from my fame. Now you have forgotten your promise; you ask that I confirm my faith by abandoning my studies. You say: "in women education only leads to vanity." Father, this is what I have always been under your guidance. The essay that I wrote was not vain. I will not do penitence in order for you to prove your spiritual zeal to others. Those who call me a heretic and ask that I be put on trial?
And if I were a heretic, would I become a saint through your coercion? Or is it mere charity. Then let it be seen as such. Proceed gently, with fatherly discretion. Censuring me, you will not attain my submission. I do not possess a servile nature. If my reason does not persuade me, I will not deprive myself of all that gives me pleasure.
(She walks forward closer to Father Antonio.)

Now I beg Your Reverence, if you do not find it in your heart to favor me, then cease being my confessor. I will regret the loss, but I will not complain, because if there is a God, it will supply me with a remedy and my soul will not be lost even though it lacks your direction. Unless, of course, God's mercy is restricted to one man? Surely not. In the meantime, I shall govern myself.

(He slaps her.) So many years, you were a satellite surveilling me—indulging in my thoughts. Enjoying the prestige of being the confessor of the Phoenix of America. Perro limitado! Limited little man, you will never pierce the sky. Mortification and prayer are not going to grant you wings. If history remembers you it will always be in reference to me. Out of here! Fuera de aquí.

Scene 8

Fuera de aquí! (She slowly takes off veil and hood. Video shows her walking through agave fields. Music begins and stage SJ crosses to back of aquarium/well and begins head washing ritual with brush.)

VIDEO 9 Running Outside
MUSIC Track 9 CaracolHair_08

(Caracol Music full out, when video of agave plant starts)

(Music ends on stage.) (Video continues until we see Sor Juana climbing the pyramids of Teotihuacán.) (On stage, SJ looks at her reflection in the water. She dries her head. Picks up hood from the ground and resists putting it back on. Then makes a decision to do so and places it back on.)

Thoughts, if you belong to me, why do I find you so perverse? You are insatiable, relentless. Give me your most impeccable advice. No more deceiving.

Scene 9

(Square of light from Scene 1 appears in center stage. Sor Juana steps into the square and is blinded by the light. She adjusts and begins to address the Brotherhood/audience.)

Illustrious men, this is not a plea for help. I demand that you be fair. I wrote the essay upon the request of someone here present. He will not come forward. He is in fear, but he knows that what I say is true. However, to have written it is not a crime. If it was allowed for Father Vieyra to pose his argument, then why could I not refute it? His opinions are not articles of faith.
Yet, you are using this essay as evidence to prove the damage that learning has on women. You not only pretend that I abandon my studies, but also that I relinquish my books and my instruments. Why? Por qué? Yo requiero una explicación! Like you, do women not have a rational soul? Or is a woman’s soul not as receptive to God’s grace and glory? What divine revelation, what rule of intellect framed us with such a severe law? From the moment I was first illuminated by the light of reason, I have had this inclination. To question is my nature. If it is evil, I am the product of it; I was born with it and with it I shall die. Beloved Fathers, will I not be saved if I am intelligent? Is it necessary to be ignorant in order to be saved? Is God not supreme wisdom? Then why would he find ignorance more acceptable than knowledge? (Pause.) Stupidity is not only confined to women, neither is intelligence a sole attribute of men.

The contradiction that you see in me has nothing to do with my nature. It is due to the circumstances imposed upon me. (Pause.) I am a nun because...it was the least unsuitable, and most honorable choice. (Pause.) I thought the convent would give me the solitude, the silence that I desperately needed. The type of silence that is only found in books. When I first entered the convent, I had with me only 39 books. And little by little my collection grew. Each new book, lead me to reread other books. It was difficult, since I have never had a teacher, nor fellow students. Yet, even with all the interruptions of convent life—the gossip, the singing, the laughter. I remained focused, disciplined, worked very hard, read and studied steadily since then.

(Proudly) And now after twenty years, without even intending, I have studied all the books of the largest library in America. Because, I have the largest collection in the new world, it is here in my cell.

"It is a pity the highest intellect is limited by a gender handicap"? I do not understand your comment. What do you mean? The only handicap I see here is your ignorance. A simplistic dogma you honor as truth.

(Sor Juana slowly turns around, suggestively shifting her veil from her back, turning her head to glance at the audience.)
Tell me more about your little fantasies regarding women. Answer me. I must know (Pause.)

Why must I know?
Porque sólo así puedo saber si me van a dejar con algo de dignidad. (Crewperson comes in and takes away her desk, her chair.)

Por qué? Por qué si es mío? (SJ looks up at her books, anticipating they too will be removed. Unexpectedly the suspended books fall and simultaneously so does she.)
Scene 10

(SJ kneels on the floor. There is a dim light cast over her. She examines her empty cell.)

MUSIC Track 10 CaracolSeizure_10a

The seizure is over. (She finds the leaf from Scene 2 on the floor.) Only mortal remains here.

(SJ turns and the aquarium is suddenly illuminated, she crawls to the step and looks for the hidden scroll. She finds it and examines the last frame against the light.)

Panorama zero. The truth is a void. All circumference, no center. Inescapable. This hollow mansion is uninhabited, in ruins. Putrid water seeps from the walls. I carved these walls, preserved their meaning patiently. Now, the borders outline a barren space. Only my insidious memories grow here, like weeds. They grow on the steps of a spiraling staircase. The spiral is a labyrinth of suspended timeframes. In continuous disintegration, always incomplete. At times the steps fold inwardly, superimposing several moments in time. The rendered copies of me exist independently, one in each chamber, but I can not determine which one I am. In this one I am an ape repeating God's words, converting them into meaningless sounds. She is the worst of all of them. I slapped her. Her senses do not claim her. Her eyes lack light. Her lips are banned. Look at this hand, copy its form. Place your palm against my palm, let your movements say what your lips can not.

Is my voice not landing? Could it be that I am outside of history and that my name has been buried with my intellect?

VIDEO 10 Modern Actress

(On stage, from under the step SJ looks for another hidden object. She sneaks it out. It is her own published manuscript. It is wrapped with a black cloth. She opens the first page and reads out loud.) Inundación castálida. De la única poetisa, Musa dézima Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.

(Pause.)

Esa soy yo.

(On stage, SJ explores the writing as if not her own. Then she stops and reads one of her poems out loud) (Simultaneously in the video, another edition of Sor Juana, interpreted by a 21st century actress reads the same poem.)
Este que ves, engaño colorido
que del arte, ostentando los primores,
con falsos sílogismos de colores
es cauteloso engaño del sentido;
este, en quien la lisonja ha pretendido excusar
de los años los horrores,
y venciendo del tiempo los rigors
triunfar de la vejez y del olvido,
es vano artificio del cuidado,
es una flor al viento delicada,
es un resguardo inutil para el hado:
es una necia diligencia errada,
es un afán caduco y, bien mirado,
es cadaver, es polvo, es sombra, es nada.

This that you gaze on, colorful deceit,
that so immodestly displays art's favors,
with its fallacious arguments of colors
is to the senses cunning counterfeit,
this on which kindness practiced to delete
from cruel years accumulated horrors,
constraining time to mitigate its rigors,
and thus oblivion and age defeat,
is but an artifice, a sop to vanity,
is but a flower by the breezes bowed,
is but a ploy to counter destiny,
is but a foolish labor, ill-employed,
is but a fancy, and, as all may see,
is but cadaver, ashes, shadow, void.

(On stage SJ begins sewing her book shut.)
(On video one sees that the modern actress is in a theatre dressing room. As she puts on her veil, she looks at herself in the mirror, someone knocks at the door. She blows out the candles and comes out onto a stage. It is a film set.)

Director: How are you feeling? (Director sees a shadow on the actor's face.)
There's a shadow on her face, can we fix it?

(The scene is slated.)

Director: Action.

Film Actress: There, she sits in that corner and sews, immersed in deep thought.
as long as I keep still and quiet, I can join her. In this same room,
like two islands united by an ocean of silence.

Music Track 12 Postlude_10c

(On stage SJ remains undisturbed. She continues sewing her book shut.)

Fade to black.

Credits roll on screen.

Curtain Call
### 3.2 Actions, Obstacles and Physical Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Action and Obstacles</th>
<th>Tactic</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prelude</td>
<td>A: To decipher first impression of my life filmstrip—A Shadow is a striking hand. In order to understand how I was able to achieve intimacy with caretaker “If I kept still and quiet I could join her, in this same room, like two islands united by an ocean of silence”</td>
<td>To remain cool and objective in order to understand data properly and arrive at a useful correlation.</td>
<td>I physicalize the memory into an actual flashback scene.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discovery of Nautilus with scroll in the aquarium/well</td>
<td>O: The filmstrip is encoded with symbols I do not understand.</td>
<td></td>
<td>I step in to a square of light. I trace cradle with hands and hold in position. I establish that I see a startle infant lying inside cradle. I establish infant’s perspective and with fist re-enact what infant, “a flat silhouette, when it moves the head spills into the ceiling.” I establish corner where mother sews. Go back to infant, shadow and mother coming to unleash the abuse.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 (continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition</th>
<th>Writing in the air</th>
<th>To connect to image and remain free from censuring thoughts</th>
<th>Witnessing the abuse generates the image of a pyramidal shadow emerging from the earth to cast on the heavens. I cross to my desk and begin to capture the images. First time audience sees my hand having an uncontrollable motion. It lifts from the page and records in mid air. Absentmindedly, I am so far gone that when I step back into reality the ink from my quill drips and almost stains my habit. I quickly move and the ink stains the floor. I carefully place the quill back on my desk, examine my stained fingers and rub them off a bit. When I look up, I notice the audience is watching me.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scene 1</strong></td>
<td>Knowledge in Isolation</td>
<td>To justify my life choice of perpetual enclosure and self-discovery.</td>
<td>I exhibit my hand and examine it with possible questions regarding its physical characteristics and its history. I remind the audience I will not disclose anything other than its compulsive drive to write. At this point the insubordinate hand slowly embraces a quill and glides down to the imaginary page. I observe it and then drop the quill as I am interrupted by Father Antonio who has censured that I write.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.1 (continued)**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene 2</th>
<th>To deny transgression in order to avoid consequences of having written the essay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Public Sphere</td>
<td>O: Father Antonio’s intolerance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Essay, a sign of disproportionate arrogance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love=incarnation, crucifixion or Eucharist. Her equation=cost in relation to utility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Reprimand Determination of Form (by chance or inherent plan of infinite precision)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To minimize action by mocking available options.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To relish in my logical elegance i assign roles to audience and have them envision themselves in hypothetical scenarios, I mock, tease and play with them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To push Father Antonio away I analyze his physical proportions then exhibit him as a disproportionate figure.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I evoke Father Antonio presence among the audience (SL). I sit sideways on the aquarium, so that most of the time I remain profile. This choice gives me the option to physicalize when I am advancing in my argument or when I am retreating or hiding. I laugh when caught with slipping in my own argument “yes, it is ironic, that by intending to defend the saints, I happened to pose an alternative argument”. Here, I no longer address Father Antonio, but the audience. I walk into my spotlight, “...not only superior to Vieyra, but the saints as well.” At this point the audience is now in my locutorio, they have come here to listen and be entertained by Sor Juana, the fabulous rhetorician. So I proceed accordingly, and address audience members directly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I evoke Father Antonio’s presence in the room once more. “Father Antonio does not move. He did not come here to negotiate...” The video is projected. After he speaks his lines, “only prayer and mortification will grant you wings.” I do a 12 count and snap fingers to pause projection and analyze his features. After arriving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Scene 3  | To prove that I am not vain, because everything that I do has a higher purpose.  
| Vanity, Abstinence, Extinction | To poke fun at those women who preoccupy themselves with growing out their hair to give them a superficial sense of accomplishment.  
|  | To entertain with a  
|  | To disclose internal sentiments, envy with delight. To flirt with audience.  

at a conclusion, I snap once more to unfreeze image and have him finish his reprimand. As I attempt to block him off by turning my head to my right shoulder I catch a hold of my right hand and question how the human form is determined. When speaking about ‘chance’ my right hand hits the left hand and shifts its shape each time. When I speak of “inherent potentialities” I pick up a transparent leaf from my desk and examine it with the light. Also the leaf serves to trace the Christ design, “two intersecting vectors and out of the vertex a thorny bleeding rose was born” I return the leaf to the desk.

I evoke the presence of the dazzled men and later I point at their gifts, the suspended books.

The bell tolls...a reminder of my character flaws, vanity and arrogance. I snap at it instantly to negate the judgment placed upon me. “I am NOT vain.” I demonstrate with my black stole how the hair would reach a maximum growth point. Then I illustrate how I utilized my hair as a marker for my learning, by going to the suspended books and point at their ascending order. When I come around to the desk again, I see the glass bowl with olives, I take one and remember that ‘the

Table 3.1 (continued)
preposterous and naive
dream-telling, but also to
disclose the god’s promise.
A promise I bought into at a
very young age, “If you
want to know everything
there is to know, you must
give it up (that which gives
you pleasure).”

To suppress pleasure by
recalling a memory that
causes disgust in order to
subordinate by biological
needs. To reveal the trap
nature sets out for those
who aspires transcendence.

To shock audience with
details so that they feel the
shame and not me.

I begin savoring the olive I’ve been holding in my hand.
I am lost in delight.

I realize that I am indulging and I stop, look at the olive
and precede telling audience story of the female dog in
heat. I remain full front, anchor gaze in the far distance
and evoke the fountain, the female dog at the very top,
the rest of the dogs on the ground. At the end of my
conclusion, “Her body had betrayed her; it emitted a
scent that would eventually determine her fate.”

Table 3.1 (continued)
To advocate for nautilus merit and validate its effort. To reccriminate authoritative environment for unjust, unforgivable actions.

unconsciously take the olive to my mouth and catch myself before putting it in my mouth. My left hand blocks the path and I turn to place the olive in glass bowl in my desk.

I take the nautilus, hold it high with my right hand, then I show audience scroll, "it kept a discipline account of each day." I place the scroll across my left forearm.

Then as I speak of its shape I hold the shell away from my body and slowly turn it while my right hand outlines its growth until it reaches maximum size. "It became a sovereign being, never having to justify to anyone." I begin to retrograde left hand in and take bring it close to my abdomen (but not touching body), "never pausing at the fear of it recoiling upon itself..." I hold it close until I talk about writing a musical treatment in its honor. I walk to aquarium (16 count) hide the scroll underneath step and place the shell inside water and right after the submerging sound of the water going into the shell I lean forward on the aquarium top and speak the following, "but you do not care because it has nothing to do with you...provided that you have given it proper form is your work". I cross to my desk and pick up a book, as I hold it, "Like an empty shell, your work will remind us
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene 4</th>
<th>My ancestry</th>
<th>To evoke the presence of the maestros</th>
<th>O: The Audience’s Skepticism</th>
<th>To confide my secret passion. To bring the maestros back to life. To arouse reverence.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I walk in front and around desk counterclockwise to upstage center. I wait for light prism to be cast, I begin walking forward, the light adds another layer and we have a cross, as I arrive at the vertex, the video projects hand opening gate, I begin speaking. “This is where I come from, my origins...” I point to one of the suspended books on the left to speak of the bible. When I speak of how books age and how they are constructed I handle with love and familiarity. I am so in touch with them that the texture, the smell speaks to me differently then to others. When I speak “eliminating all extraneous noise, like with music.” I close my eyes and hear the music. I am slowly taken by it and begin to turn with extended arms and book in hand (this turn of flying returns at the end of Scene 5). When the minute of “perfection” comes to an end, I am once again full front holding the same book in my hand, but awaken to a new reality, a revelation, “one day I will be among them, out of boiled rags of cotton I will beaten to a creamy pulp....on thin sheets my sooty thoughts will also stain the surface.”</td>
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Table 3.1 (continued)
Scene 5  
Piercing the heavens

To certify my body is instrumental, a vehicle to achieve my life goal....heaven.

O: My erotic fantasies

To dismiss Father

Antonio’s intrusion of my privacy. To invite audience to examine their own body’s and find the wonder in its construction.

As I use the book to anchor my gaze, I remember having one of my ‘sooty thoughts’ questioned by Father Antonio. I stand up and in profile, I demonstrate the stretch I habitually exercise and the body parts I like to feel while stretching—with my right hand I touch my pelvis, then I move it around to my lower back. Next, my right hand goes to my right clavicle and the left arm twists to touch the right scapula. I continue demonstrating the movement that is possible with this construction of the shoulder girdle. When Father Antonio asks of my thoughts, I proceed with my right hand as if reaching in back for an arrow and with my left as if holding a bow. I mime shooting the arrow and create a vocal echo as it pierces the heavens. Now with both arms outstretched I vocally recreate the sound of wind as I glide, “able to pierce the heavens, like an arrow stretching a bow, in absolute readiness, at extreme potential and power.” This choreography is repeated at the end of the scene, “Do you think he was actually afraid I would be able to pierce the heavens?” With a smile a turn as I glide through the heavens. When at full back to audience, my back is totally quiet, only my arms continue in motion, crisscross and eventually sliding

Table 3.1 (continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene 6</th>
<th>To suppress sexual desire, Maria Luisa.</th>
<th>To negate my love and expose myself as a liar to Maria Luisa. To admit my corporeal limitation, &quot;this body is down the body, in a heated embrace by someone I desire.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Temptation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O: Maria Luisa's beauty</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To guide audience through my experience as if on a travel tour. To admit to having a desire, however with emotional detachment.</td>
<td>I quickly turn to audience and assess their judgment, &quot;The verses that I wrote to Maria Luisa are not perverse. The are immaculate conceptions.&quot; I cross to my desk, and take out box with her hair strands. Carefully, I unfold them, take in their sent and remember her. &quot;Discreetly within these confinements, she undressed before me. She wanted me to look at her.&quot; I cross to chair place in the front row among the audience, pick up microphone. The audience sees Maria Luisa as she asks me to look at her. I respond via the microphone, &quot;but I could not look at her, instead I focused on an ink stain on the floor.&quot; I turn down to the floor to evoke stain. Then Maria Luisa continues &quot;I beg you to look at me&quot; At this point I look up to take her in and describe to the audience what I see, &quot;she was so beautiful...&quot; &quot;Déjeme!&quot; I step forward to center stage, slowly turn to address Maria Luisa's questioning. My face remains neutral, my voice over is heard with an echo, but my mouth never opens. I reach forward with both arms, then once more the arms stretch out and to the sides. This</td>
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Table 3.1 (continued)
| Scene 7 | Betrayal | To plead for protection from Father Antonio. | To reminisce him into a time when he admired me. To remind him of his promise. To implicate him in my supervised actions. To accuse him of using me for his own self interest. To rebel against system. To discharge him as confessor. | I walk center upstage and turn right in a sharp angle as if going through a corridor. I sit on an aquarium in profile like with Scene 2. Slowly I stand facing front. He signals me to step to the side and pray, “Padre nuestro que estas en los cielos…” I can not remember the prayer because I am interrupted by my realization, “you profited from my fame...you have forgotten your promise.” Still on the side, but full front, “I will not do repentance…” After a beat, I step forward DR. I am face to face with him, perhaps about a foot away, “Now I beg your reverence, if you do not find it in your heart to favor me then cease being my confessor....In the meantime, I shall govern neuter...” time it is not a sign of flight, but of vulnerability and distortion. I remain with arms, wings hyper extended, then slowly with closed fists bring them close to body and cover my front. She demands that I give her my manuscripts, I quickly respond by crossing to desk, gathering manuscripts and leaf. I inconspicuously drop the leaf mid way and before handing over the manuscripts I hold them close. “What will you do with them? (…) this is all of me.” I place them to her feet, down on the ground and remain there until the sound of the bell. |

Table 3.1 (continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene 8</th>
<th>To purge myself of all mental filth that runs through my mind after acknowledging betrayal and the proximity of someone so evil, in order to find my center and strength. O: My raging anger at Father Antonio's betrayal.</th>
<th>To scrape off all infected areas.</th>
<th>myself.” He slaps me. I respond with full confrontation that ends in throwing him out. I slowly remove the veil and hood. When music begins, I allow it to be my mental score that propels me into taking the brush violently scrubbing my head, inflicting the necessary pain in order to contain the chaos. I look up into the light to catch my breath. Then when I have achieved control, I dry my head. I mechanically pick up the hood, then stop and realize the guise that it is, make a decision to wear it. Now I take the veil and as I cover my head.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scene 9</td>
<td>To defy the Church by defending who I am and my possessions. O: I am surrounded by a misogynist Brotherhood.</td>
<td>To plead to the illustrious men that they arrive at a fair judgment. To expose (their unfounded argument). To claim (my right) to question and to express my intellectual nature. To prove (my merit) and force them to acknowledge (my effort). To shame their prejudice. To beg that they</td>
<td>I step into the square of light. I am blinded by the light and I adjust to the brightness. I proceed in my defense. At times my disobedient right hand wants to express itself and the left hand keeps takes hold and does not allow it to point or strike. At the end, I imply that one of the men has asked me, ‘why must I always KNOW?’ At this point it becomes clear that I have failed. “Porque sólo así sabré si me van a dejar con algo de dignidad.” I turn and look at my desk. Stage hand comes in and strikes it away. The same with my chair. Now I look at my books. We both, the books and I unexpectedly fall to</td>
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Table 3.1 (continued)
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<tr>
<th>Transition</th>
<th>Proceed in a humane way.</th>
<th>The floor.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The seizure</td>
<td>To integrate experience in order to move forward.</td>
<td>I examine the pattern on the floor. I look up at what was once the largest collection in the new world. I look down again at the floor pattern to attempt to understand it and find the leaf from Scene 2, the one with &quot;potentialities inherent in a fix plan of infinite precision.&quot; I question my design and my context. &quot;only a mortal remains here.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Scene 10 | To decipher the last impression on my life filmstrip in order to assess if I achieved my objective, immortality. | To describe my reality solely by what can be objectively observed. |
| Panorama Zero | O: Unfamiliar reality, lack of a reliable reference point. | The nautilus shape appears on the floor and illuminates the aquarium. I remember my hidden treasures: the scroll, the shell. I find the scroll, go behind aquarium and hold it against the light. I examine the frames, in some I find delight. Others I simply avoid. The last frame is difficult to decipher. I trace my finger on its edge; repeat the gesture with my arm as if splitting time and jump-cutting into the frame. Now the irrevocable truth is revealed. I describe what I see—a void, an empty shell, an illusion, space-time continuum with multiple rendered copies of myself. It then occurs to me that I could be standing outside of history. I then uncover the only book I have saved. It is wrapped in black cloth, hidden under the step. I open it and realize that it is my own book. I flip through the pages. I stop to read one of |

Table 3.1 (continued)
the poems, but I fail to understand my own words. It is too painful to recall, perhaps. On this same page I find a needle with red thread. I pick up the needle and sew my words shut. I proceed to sew my book while the video projects a reality 300 years later. A modern actress in a dressing room dressed in Sor Juana’s habit, reads the same poem I just read. She walks into a set and describes me as “sewing, immersed in deep thoughts.” She then attempts to bridge the ocean of silence by keeping still and quiet within the camera frame.” I continue sewing, unaffected.

Table 3.1 above depicts the character score I followed in order to play each scene action. It includes obstacles, actions, tactics and a detailed physical description of activities and gestures.
3.3 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

The following section delineates how I, as the actress created the stage character of Sor Juana. I will be referring to myself in the first person, as “I” the character of Sor Juana.

The Period: Prior to the beginning of the play I am preoccupied by the recent revolt involving hundreds of Indians and several criollos. According to what I have been told, the Indians crowded outside the granary demanding they be given food. The guards clubbed a pregnant Indian woman, consequently she miscarried. The beaten woman was carried in a procession to the palace. The infuriated mob of rioters tore off boards and reeds, ignited them and used them to set fire to the doors of the palace. A priest surrounded by altar boys emerged from the cathedral. And the mob knelt as the holy symbol passed by. Three of the leaders were caught, executed and their hands were exhibited in the plaza. After this miraculous act by the Church, the religious conservatives (the Archbishop of Mexico, Father Francisco Aguía y Seijas and my own confessor, Father Antonio Núñez de Miranda) have gained governing power over the Crown’s ruling viceroy.

The Criollo society, to which I belong, lives in fear of another Indian uprising. In these times of uncertainty the aristocracy seeks refuge and protection from the influential religious men who now preach that these events—the corn crops that have been ruined by a plague of the chahuixtle weevils, the famine, the floods, the solar eclipse -- are all signs of an angry god. I am told that our infuriated God is responding to our moral misconduct.
The only way to appease Him is by doing acts of penance, i.e. donating one's possessions to the Church, taking part in public processions parading miraculous images and mortifying my body with painful flagellations.

The Status: The Bishop of Puebla, Father Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz requested that I write a critical essay (Carta Atenagórica) refuting the thoughts of a famous sermon by a well-known Portuguese Jesuit, Father Antonio de Vieyra. He then published my essay and distributed it among intellectual circles. I was not naïve. I knew this irreverent act would provoke the conservative princes of the Church. However, I ignored the political context. My mischievous act is not forgivable. I am trapped between political rivalries. I do not know who to trust since criticisms against my participation in theological discussions are signed with pseudonyms. They declare my action as heretical. I fear that they will now carefully examine me. The church authorities want to avoid a scandal at all costs. Maria Luisa, the Countess of Paredes, manages to delay the attacks from the Church by publishing my second collection of works and strategically including my Carta Atenagórica with the approving appraisal of it by influential Spanish Holy Office Inquisitors. Father Antonio, my confessor wants me to write a letter of apology and a retraction to all that I have stated.

Objective: I want to immortalize myself via my recorded thoughts in order to transcend my physical existence.

The Stakes: If I am put on trial, I may lose all my possessions [my books] and privileges [my communication with the outside world and my life as a writer].

Given Circumstances: I was not allowed to attend school or to have a teacher. But I am very disciplined. On my own I managed to attain books, to study them, and to
question everything that I encounter. My gender and my intellectual superiority are a double affront to the intelligentsia. It offends my superiors who consider themselves theologians, literati, poets. They cloak their hostility and jealousy by pretending to protect their high principles. They tell me I must have respect for authority, to be obedient, to show my devotion to religious duty. Maria Luisa is far away in Spain. Locally, I no longer have any royal protection. Father Antonio, my guide, my counselor, my critic, my judge, who was once gentle, now is my tormentor. I fear him. With him, there is no intellectual conversation, no gentle spiritual release—only soul searching, harsh meditation, hair shirts for the body, humiliations for the mind. No one else can defend me. I do not have faith in anything except myself. I cannot afford to surrender to everything that I am in order to be saved by a god. I can not leave this convent. I am confined by my perpetual vow of enclosure. I do not feel the entrapment as long as I am able to read, write and hold my discussions with my visitors. If this communication is severed—then my cell that was once a worldly and intellectual center will become an austere and barren room, and my mind can perhaps collapse.

Obstacles: I am arrogant and vain. My intellectual brilliance gives me the illusion that I am above everyone, untouchable, unreachable. However, everyone wants to humble me, to silence me. I do not have any allies, except for Maria Luisa, the Countess but she has returned to Spain. I can not leave the convent because of my vow to perpetual enclosure.

My Mind: My mind is my greatest strength/weakness and therefore contributes to my downfall. I am arrogant. I know more than anyone else because I am "the highest intellect in America." I have attained this position by swimming upstream, all alone and
against all odds. Even though my reasoning ability is compulsive, I never lose my lucid mind. In Scene 10, after being stripped off all my possessions [my library]. I allude to resorting to self-abnegation and mortification, because out of despair this is the only strategic response possible.¹

**My Heart:** My heart is mediated always through my mind. My search for truth is only interested in form, not emotional content. It is difficult for me to admit to loving someone. The same mind that helps me examine phenomena alienates me from my own emotions. I find intimacy only through disassociation, or when mediated through heightened forms—via music, literature, or intellectual abstractions.

**My Body:** I am vain. I know that I am beautiful and enjoy the impression I make on the people that surround me. I am tall and thin. I have long legs and elegant hands. My walk is an even effortless glide across the surface. As a defensive mechanism, I maintain an ironic smile at all times while moving "with ease and at times with elegance, through dangerous and mined terrain" (Paz, 127). My gaze has a piercing quality. I have developed the ability to go for long periods of time without blinking from my intense study sessions. Often during debates as I demand a response I intimidate my listeners by casting this same inquisitive look. Even though people are sexually attracted to me, I have always managed to block off their energy. I deny being a woman because my gender is an impediment in the patriarchal society I live in. My body is inferior to my mind; it is a subordinate instrument, a neuter vehicle that must follow the indications that my mind gives so that I may transcend this physical plane.

**My Spirit:** I would love to believe in a higher power, in an afterlife, but deep down inside my reason opposes all dogma which requires an act of faith. I believe that all
must be questioned equally and arrived at through empirical proof. This includes God's existence. This is the only way I will find an irrevocable truth that connects me to an existential purpose. Up to now I can not figure out why I am the way that I am, a genius, an anomaly in nature. Only through incessant questioning will I ever figure it out. If I cannot question, then I cannot evaluate and judge. If I cannot question, then I will remain silent and have everyone judge my silence.

3.4 Actor Preparation

Techniques: Sueño is vocally demanding because of its complex text structure I was terrified of this since I have always believed that movement is my strength,. During the first stage of my rehearsal process I focused completely on the memorization and on the blocking and choreography of my gestures. When it came to delivering the text I found out that understanding the text solely from an imagistic point of view was not enough to convey the character's intricate thoughts. Some scenes included long rhetorical deliveries filled antithetical phrases and ellipses. In order to successfully convey the material and drive through the end of a line, I had to carefully study where in the sentence I should have to pause, inflect, change tone or terminate. Sor Juana is a seventeenth century Criolla. I gave her just a slight accent to indicate her Spanish ancestry, but otherwise her pronunciation is formal, taut and precise. I was very much aware that my delivery should not fall into a melodious or sing-song effect. On the contrary, Sor Juana's baroque sentences, even though they make many turns and loops, are assertive and know precisely where they are going. The voice is fully supported. I try not to shift to higher registers, unless, during times when the character is out of control.
Alexander Technique: After taking two courses with Dr. William Conable, a renowned professor in Alexander Technique, "a method for improving physical coordination and kinesthetic perception," I became aware of my entire skeletal support system (not just lungs and ribs, but every single bone and attachment from the toes to the skull). In order to be able to vocally support Sor Juana, and move with ease during the entire 60 minute show, I remember my bone placement. I remembered to lengthen my spine and widen hips and my back. I remembered my four curves. I remembered to drop the breath and soften my belly. I found that Sor Juana was the ideal Alexander Technique character because she naturally "leads with her head" and her head is connected with the sky at all times. I believe this physical composure gave Sor Juana a sense of dignity, but also openness.

Linklater: Prior to each rehearsal and performance I did a Linklater ZOOWOE SHAW vocal scale. This vocal warm-up allowed me to find a wider vocal range and a lower register. To improve the clarity of my delivery and be able to bite on the consonants, I also spoke my text with a pencil across my lips. During the run of the show, each morning I made sure to speed through my entire text in full voice in order to eliminate any self-doubt and refresh the scene sequences.

Suzuki: In order to find the energetic connection of the text, I recited the text in full voice in Suzuki's First and Second Seated position. Because in these difficult positions, my abdominals are totally engaged, my awareness for breath shifted to my back side. Also, with this additional intake of air, I found a way to drive through the long
rhetorical sections that require more efficient use of the breath. I was able to find my intention. I focused on the subtleties of my intonation rather than on the effort behind my delivery.

Laban: I defined the way the character moves according to the Laban’s effort qualities—inner attitudes/energies of the movement that establish a particular action dynamic. There are four qualities that affect movement delivery: flow (bound or free), weight (heavy or light), time (sustained or quick) and space (direct or indirect) I found that as Sor Juana, I walked or sat primarily with a glide quality (sustained, light and direct). My hands were the only part of my body that was allowed uncensored expression. When at ease they remained light and free, when under excitement they acquired a bound quality—they moved with precision and deliberation. Most of the gestures that I used were behavioral, with a variation in levels of stylization. In Scene 6, I did make use of full expressive gestures, abstract symbols that showed Sor Juana’s emotional state. In this scene, the choreography was underscored with a voice-over and it counterpointed what was being heard.

Yoga: As a warm-up before every show I completed a series of yoga exercises. It became imperative that I find Tadasana or Mountain Pose prior to the performance. In Tadasana, my bare feet are fully grounded (at four points) and spread wide. This full connection to the floor allowed me to glide across the stage. In tadasana I am able to distributing my weight evenly as I walk, instead of dropping heavily on my heels (my usual habit). It also allows me to unlock my knees and keep a fluid connection through the pelvis and up the spine to find the length into my neck and head placement.
**Viewpoints:** I attempted to remain connected and affected by my environment with kinesthetic responses. Tina Landau defines kinesthetic response as a "spontaneous reaction to motion which occurs outside of you; the timing in which you respond to the external events of movement or sound; the impulsive movement which occurs from a stimulation of the senses. An example: someone claps in front of your eyes and you blink in response, or someone slams a door and you impulsively stand up from the chair in which you were sitting."³ I remained connected to the audience as a whole. However, there were moments when I targeted specific individuals. I allowed their reactions to affect my own delivery. I was also attuned to the stage elements. For example, during Scene 9, the books and I simultaneously dropped to the ground. There were moments when I treated the light as a glow that emanated from my own skin. The times gobo patterns were used, I made sure that I could interact with them, taking them as physical sculptures. I choose to enter, to hide within them or to carefully examine them. The music was also actively a part of my subtext, and I used it to influence my breath and alter my heartbeat.

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1 I am undoubtedly affected by the seizing of all my books and instruments, but even though the play ends shortly after that, in real life Sor Juana did secretly disobey the authorities. In 1995, an inventory of her cell was recovered which contests her conversion and abandonment of her studies. The records show that 180 books apparently remained in Sor Juan's cell along with fifteen pages of sacred and profane writings.

2 Dr. William Conable, class session, Music 610 Alexander Technique Course, The Ohio State University, 2003.

CHAPTER 4

THE FILM SCENES

This section is most extensive since it addresses my area of investigation: How can the use of video in theatre be effectively integrated to evoke simultaneous realities? In this section I synthesize various aspects of the video production. I will address the reasoning behind the Mexico on-site shoots. With the exception of recording my own hand flipping through a first edition of Sor Juana's work, I did not direct any of the shoots. However, I did have four definite applications of how I thought video could function in the theatrical setting. After explaining to each filmmaker what experience I wanted to evoke, I trusted completely in their personal interpretation. I rarely checked their frame composition. I chose to be a facilitator for their creative vision. When I was the subject that was to be filmed, I followed precisely the filmmaker's directions.

In regards to the local Ohio shoots, I was in charge of the entire production end: the casting, the location set-up, the equipment, the props, the catering. However, I will not discuss these. Instead, I will focus on delineating the manner in which each filmmaker chose to shoot the material and also how the video sequences were then integrated into the stage. Six filmmakers were involved: Johannes Birringer, René Peñaloza Galván, Katalina Gutierrez, Krisztina Lengyel, Sarah Reese, and Sergio Rodríguez. In the actors section, I introduce each actor with a brief description of the
historical figure they are representing. I also state why I cast each actor and my
evaluation of their performances. Brian Rotman played the role of Father Antonio Núñez
de Miranda, addressed in the play as Father Antonio. Nancy Fox interpreted the role of
Marfa Luisa Manrique de Lara y Gonzaga, the Countess de Paredes, known in the play as
Maria Luisa. Finally, Sue Calligaris played the role of the modern actress assuming the
character of Sor Juana.

Even though I did not have a written script prior to shooting in Mexico last
summer, I did have an intuitive idea of how I wanted to use video in performance. In the
following sections I will describe the four potential spaces I wanted to be suggested via
projected images: fantasies within the mind space, an enclosure that can expand and
contract within the physical space of the black box theatre, distorted memories, and
images that I want to call "sensorial inserts.” The term refers to the film editing technique
of "inserting" a shot in a film, taken after the filming of a particular sequence. Similarly,
in my case, the "inserts" were the last to be incorporated. However, their function was not
to correct a missing gap in the narrative, but rather to evoke an organic response from the
audience.

4.1 Fantasies within the Mind Space

The first and most obvious possibility would be capturing Sor Juana's fantastical
mindspace. I recalled how in the classical films of the 1930's (Sergei Eisenstein's ¡Viva
México! and Julio Bustillo Oro's Dos monjes) the use of ritualistic Mexican images in
allegorical landscapes successfully evoked an expressionist, sometimes surrealist reality.
Fig. 4.1 Sergei Eisenstein, *Viva México!,* 1931

Fig. 4.2 Julio Bustillo Oro, *Dos monjes,* 1934
I decided similarly to explore spaces and locations that could function as allegorical images for some of the obsessive motifs in Sor Juana’s writings and her literary flights of the imagination such as pyramids, soaring shadows, darkness, mist, valleys, mountains, winged animals, flight, ascension, wind, stairways, sacrifice, cryptic encoding, wind, slow time, sleep, ocean, seashore, burning sun. To support her search for immortality, I thought the Teotihuacán pyramids, the blue agave fields with their red earth, and the ocean, could serve as effective territories in conveying Sor Juana’s syncretistic visions in regard to an existential death and an emblematic transcendence of this reality.

Katalina Gutierrez conducted the shoot at the Teotihuacán pyramids. Even though she had never used a digital video camera before, I immediately trusted her after seeing her work. I was impressed by her painting technique. She, like Nicaraguan painter Armando Morales, created fantastical scenarios by layering semi-transparent painted images like a series of superimposed photographs. She also showed me haunting photographic montages she completed with the help of a dancer friend of hers. What I found so extraordinary and promising, since I had limited financial resources was how Gutierrez was able to produce such powerful suggestive work with very limited materials. For example, she worked only with a scratched up photography camera, a couple of candles, and a bit of fabric.

Initially, during the Teotihuacán shoot I saw that she was uncomfortable with the idea of simply capturing an image straight. After an hour of experimentation, she began to bring out the fantastical by exploring with different light exposures, camera tilts and extreme close-ups and long shots. After four hours of heat, thirst and vigorous climbing,
I decided to take a rest before descending once more from the pyramid. As I closed my eyes and enjoyed the cooling benefits of being so high up, Gutierrez shot her most compelling composition. First, she established a medium close-up shot of a sleeping Sor Juana on top of the pyramid. She then slowly zoomed out and began to steadily rotate the image. The sleeping inverted Sor Juana transformed into a tiny figure, an upside down bat attached to the stone.

Fig.4.3 Video still shot by Katalina Gutierrez used in Scene 8

Most of the video footage at Arandas, Jalisco was shot by Sergio Rodríguez, another collaborator. By establishing contrasting texture and color relationships he managed to change the interpretation of the material shot and to evoke the surrealism of this particular Mexican geography. The thorny blue agave fields transformed into a distant sea surrounded by mountains and the glistening earth beneath my feet magically bled. Sergio also moved away from the picturesque and explored the frame-subject
relationship. He specified that I deliver particular movements while entering the frame in order to counterpoint with his camera pans and play with the idea of subject disappearance.

Fig. 4.4 Video still shot by Sergio Rodriguez used in Scene 8 during the ritual cleansing

The video footage taken in Boca del Rio, Veracruz took place in December 2002. We had a final script and Birringer had conceived of possible images that could work to counterpoint specific sections of the play. However, much of our experimentation was reduced due to hostile climate conditions and my illness during our stay. I contracted some kind of virus and it was not until the day before departing that I was able to get up and force myself to do an exterior shot at the seashore. We woke up at six in the morning.
The shooting location was truly mystical and mysterious. I crossed my fingers and hoped that the camera could capture what I was seeing, a mysterious thick fog that veiled the shoreline. The rising sun was majestic; it covered half of the frame in a long shot. We acted quickly. Birringer asked for specific gestures that would not be ritualistic, but rather related to Sor Juana's compulsive nature to write and to conceptualize. I simulated writing against the sand and Birringer suggested that I use the sun as my writing plane. I thought of Sor Juana's Primero Sueño, and her allusion to Phaeton driving his chariot fearlessly into the sun. Finally, Birringer asked that I slowly walk into the sea towards the sun. I walked forward until the shot was abruptly interrupted by my terrified exit after seeing a mysterious shadow, a stingray I confused for a shark.

Fig.4.5 Video still from Scene 1, shot on the edge of the ocean in Veracruz

4.2 AN ENCLOSURE THAT CAN EXPAND AND CONTRACT

For 25 years, Sor Juana remained within the walls of the San Geronimo Convent. I found it was imperative to establish some of the filmic spaces as her actual physical
environment. After securing the filming permit at the former seventeenth century convent at Desierto de los Leones in Cuajimalpa, Katalina Gutierrez, René Peñaloza Galván and I carried out an intense two-day video shoot. On the first day, we focused on staging fictional scenarios that would establish Sor Juana's alchemistic experimentations with form, space and time. We took with us candles, black yarn, fabric, flashlights, large sheets of paper, ink, brushes, glitter, a broken mirror, feathers and a dead chicken. Unfortunately, the mysterious occult shots of deep shadows and distorted spaces that Gutierrez created were too heavily underexposed for stage projection.

The second day Peñaloza Galván took over the direction of the shoot. Here the focus became capturing the convent's architectural structure. I have worked with Peñaloza Galván in four other film shorts. I trust his meticulous approach. During this shoot, for example, he first carefully walked through the convent's intricate corridors. He studied not only the significance of where they led him, but most importantly how he was lead. After some site exploration, he insisted that we shoot long continuous shots, and that we use the interplay of shadows to alter the shot's point of view. I agreed seeing the possibility of using these shifts of perspective to weave staged choreography into a composite or dual scene depicting Sor Juana's enclosure. His most successful shot started with a frontal close up on my hands opening a gate that led me to the exterior of the cloister garden. I carried a book in my hand, and as I read it, René walked backwards pulling back in tandem with my motion so that the scale remained the same. As I turned, he switched angles and shot me in profile revealing in the background a series of dark demolished rooms. When we approached the second turn, taking the opportunity of momentarily entering a darker space, he advised me to exit the frame so that he (the
camera) would become my point of view and consequently the viewers would share how I encountered the journey. This particular shot is my favorite, because it truly evokes the contemplative ambience of the convent. As I walked through the long corridor, a dark tunnel segmented by brief slivers of light coming from small windows, I imagined myself as Sor Juana, immersed in thought, theorizing on temporal and spatial relations. Was I moving through the corridor, or was it perhaps an illusionary effect due to relativity and in fact I was in complete stillness, while the exterior world moved past me?

Fig. 4.6 Sueño. Video still from Scene 4
4.3 Distorted Memories

Once I had a completed script, I realized the critical role memories have in the construction of one's reality. I felt driven to create four additional scenes that could illuminate the culminating events in Sor Juana's life. All memories, except Memory 4, were shot from Sor Juana's point of view.

4.3.1 Memory 1: The Striking Hand

Scene 1 begins with Sor Juana's remembrance of her first impressions as a child. Here I wanted to explore how one deals with violence through abstraction. In the studio, Birringer placed a black velvet backdrop and a single light coming from above. He created the traumatic memory by shooting my hand's ambiguous shadow against the drop. As I delivered the striking motion in his direction, he cross-dissolved into a medium shot revealing the hand coming out of the shadows and violently striking the subject, the infant Sor Juana.

Fig. 4.7 Sueño, Video still from Scene 1: the striking arm
4.3.2 Memory 2: The Reprimand

The memory takes place in the middle of Scene Two, as Sor Juana recalls Father Antonio's aggressive confrontation. He scolds her and threatens her if she does not change her ways. Sor Juana attempts to disassociate from the experience by analyzing Father Antonio's proportions. Sarah Reese dimly lit the theatre storage area to create a dungeon environment. She then experimented with establishing the scene with a medium shot of Father Antonio. Not content with the effect, she asked me to hold a barred window in front of Father Antonio, while she shot him with at low angle through the bars. The bars alluded to the architecture of confessionals. When he finished speaking the scripted text and improvised mouthing a series of threats, Sarah zoomed in on various parts of his face—the mouth, the eye and lastly the forehead. Afterwards, I was impressed with Sarah's manipulation of the footage. Her editing precisely depicted what I had envisioned for this scene, Sor Juana's defensive analysis of Father Antonio's perverse form.

Fig. 4.8 Suello, Video still from Scene 2

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4.3.3 Memory 3: The Temptation

Birringer shot this video sequence as a film noir composition in black and white. In this scene, as the stage actress seats unlit amongst the audience she steps into a different reality (the camera eye). Here, she is able to confess her erotic fantasy when not directly seen. As she recalls her memory, there is enough distance from the sensual and emotional weight of the moment.

After several rehearsals of Scene 6, Maria Luisa's seduction, we realized that the text required that the video of Maria Luisa be present throughout the entire length of the scene. The script demanded that the stage Sor Juana directly addressed the film actress in the beginning and at the end of the scene. During the middle section, however, while the film character undresses, the stage Sor Juana recounts her resistance to the temptation with a live narration. With this in mind, Birringer had to allow adequate space for the stage Sor Juana to interact. During the shoot, I stood directly behind the camera. This not only provided the actress with specific anchor points for her gaze, but also it paced Johannes' continuous shot as he panned across Maria Luisa's body and landed at her feet. In the scene, Maria Luisa responds to Sor Juana's rejection by demanding that the stage Sor Juana declare her true feelings for her. To evoke the emotional inadequacy felt by Sor Juana, Birringer decided to record her response using a distancing device created by recording my live voice through a film camera. The camera was connected to a broadcasting computer which transmitted the video and audio back to us via the internet (telepresence). This created a small delay or feedback echo which we decided to keep.
Thus, my voice traveled back and forth and generating an eerie sense of doubleness or self-dividedness, an effect that I felt was perfectly consonant with the emotional ambivalence Sor Juana’s experiences in this erotic encounter.

4.3.4 MEMORY 4: THE FILMMAKER

I include this film scene in the memory section because of thematic reasons. The play meditates on one’s ability to exceed one’s physical limitations. Is it possible to own a memory that one has not yet lived, or will never live? At the end of the play Sor Juana finds her hidden “life filmstrip” underneath a step. She holds it against the light and like a photographer or filmmaker begins to “develop” the sequence of moments in her existence.

Fig.4.9 Sueño, 2003. Video still from Scene 10

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The last frame situates her in "panorama zero," a non-local, atemporal continuum. The Sor Juana the audience has met in the flesh now becomes a memory, as the modern actress on the screen prepares herself to go on stage to enact her. We see her large projection on the wall, rehearsing/reciting the same text Sor Juana is reading. The double recitation creates a spatial montage. As Eisenstein suggested many years ago, the spectator now travels with the image of the future that is created in the montage, seeing not the representative elements of a finished work, but experiencing the dynamic process of emergence. The actress of the future becomes Sor Juana's forward recollection, so to speak. She takes over while I, the staged Sor Juana already fade into memory of the past.

Fig. 4.10 Sueño, Video still from Scene 10
4.4. Sensorial Inserts

One advantage that film has over theatre is that it is able to provide the spectator with a very close view for examining a subject. The audience senses are affected by the amount of visual detail it is given to see. We inserted three short video sequences to evoke in the audience an organic response to Sor Juana's narrated fantasies in regards to the underwater nautilus, the piercing of heaven and the presence of her maestros.

The nautilus video sequences were sampled from a PBS documentary titled "Shapes of Life." The nautilus images were used to ironically juxtaposed or expand what was seen on stage. For example, as Sor Juana held the empty nautilus shell and spoke of immortality, the audience saw the buoyant creature, in fact alive in its awesome deep-sea habitat.

Fig. 4.11 Sueño, Video still from Scene 3

In Scene Five, while Sor Juana pretends to "pierce the heavens," I wanted to evoke the sense of wind blowing through the body. I used the cloud footage I had shot
from an airplane. The clouds slowly turned into flames. The flames represented her blazing desire. This juxtaposition of air and sky had two interpretations. In the allegorical sense and inspired by Sor Juana's *Primero Sueño*, the flames represented, Sor Juana approaching the sun like Phaeton. The second and more carnal interpretation was a link to Sor Juana's consuming desire for Maria Luisa.

![Image](image_url)

*Fig. 4.12 Sueño, Video still from Scene 4*

Lastly, in Scene Four, interested in evoking the magnificence and presence of the *maestros* in her library, we used a series of rotating extreme close ups of old manuscripts written in Latin. The video sequence was composed as a series of stills which slowly dissolve into each other. Some of the Latin pages containing geometrical drawings are placed in angles on the screen. My movement on stage is connected to these shapes and
also, on the emotional level, seeks to express the symmetry in the classical music composition we hear at this point.

4.5 Interaction with the Films

One of the challenges that I faced was developing tactics to interact with the video sequences. I had to learn how to make them an extension of my own imagination and have them feed my stage actions. Establishing a connection with actors or objects on film was a bit difficult. The projected characters are predictable. It is impossible for them to forget a line, or to deliver it with a variation in intensity. In fact, since the two-dimensional prerecorded characters were not really present on stage and could not be affected by my delivery, I felt that they absorbed my energy and could potentially kill my drive. Like with mime, in order to make the interaction believable for myself and for the audience, I had to learn to counterweight my own delivery. However, there were times that what was needed is for me to simply remain open and porous. For example, at the end of Scene 4, as I turned and gave my back to the audience I was taken by the beautiful projection of old manuscript on the back wall. As I held the book in my hand, and slowly turned I imagined that the text was being projected on my own skin.

I also found ways to "affect" the video sequences by introducing a physically gesture, before it was seen on the screen. Since the film represented an extension of my mind, I had to believe that I had the power to alter my remembrances or fantasies. For example, in Scene 2, in which I create an imaginary dialogue with Father Antonio, a film of Father Antonio appears. It is a projection of his head. He reprimands me, and his voice is angry. I intervene into the image movement, freezing the image with a snap. Because my back is facing the image I must gaze forward with a predetermined path to simulate then
remember the image I can not see. I believe the still allows me a close-up observation of the physiognomy of the Father. As if it were under a microscope, distortions of the face become apparent, which elicit my interpretation of different perceptions of reality. I believe that I have the power to unfreeze the image with a snap. The image itself then deteriorates and the film forwards slowly. With this video interaction I became aware of the dramatic effect the zoom/close-up can have as well the anamorphism that is made possible through the digital compositing technology.

![Image](image.png)

Fig 4.13 **Suñho**, 2003. Video still from Scene 2

In order to create a dialogue with the characters on video, I had to carefully consider where my eyes should focus so that the scene read as a live interaction. I relied on counting. I took slow deep breaths and kept my count consistent by pacing it against my
heartbeat. In Scene 6, which is an intimate seduction scene between Maria Luisa, the Countess of Paredes and Sor Juana, the projected film of Maria Luisa directly interacts with the character on stage. Maria Luisa demands that Sor Juana look at her while she slowly undresses. At this point Sor Juana steps out of the scene and in complete darkness she provides the live narrative to the black and white film. As Sor Juana, I express the psychological violence of my fantasy. I made use of a microphone and altered my stage voice in order to softly describe my paradoxical erotic attraction and repulsion. The scene ends with me re-entering the scene to abort the seduction. In a precisely choreographed interaction between film projection and theatre, the film actress and I resolve the conflict by making an exchange. Maria Luisa asks for my manuscripts and I place them at her feet.

Fig. 4.14  Sueño, 2003. Video still from Scene 6
4.6 THE ACTORS ON FILM

FATHER ANTONIO.................................Brian Rotman
COUNTESS MARIA LUISA..........................Nancy Fox
MODERN FILM ACTRESS PLAYING SOR JUANA.....Sue Calligaris

4.6.1 FATHER ANTONIO NÚÑEZ DE MIRANDA

According to Octavio Paz, Father Antonio Núñez de Miranda was a Criollo, 30
years older than Sor Juana. His passion for discipline and his energy, skill and zeal placed
him in influential public positions of authority. He became censor of the Inquisition and
prefect of the Brotherhood of Mary. He dressed in rags and was known for his acts of
penance. Often he mortified and scourged himself, wearing hair shirts that caused vermin
to breed in his body. His door was said to be splattered with blood. He lacked good
vision, and eventually became totally blind. He repressed his emotions as well as
castigating his body. Paz describes him as "excitable, pugnacious, and choleric". In an
effort to contain his raging attacks he is said to have become pale, and physically
disjointed. "His asceticism served an exacting morality, a kind of spiritual athleticism."²

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Unlike Sor Juana, he was not a true intellectual. "His every action was inspired by unconditional adherence to the status quo. Núñez de Miranda was a conformist and could only have been scandalized by Sor Juana's attitudes, her poems, her intellectual curiosity and her belligerent feminism."\(^3\)

I cast Brian Rotman not only because was an older bald man, but more importantly because he had piercing, intelligent eyes, eyes that imply contradictions, that make sharp turns in the mind and take pleasure in mischievous stripping and poking. From the moment I first met him I was taken by his nature and noticed that afterwards I was not only entertained by his presence, but intellectually moved with my perspective altered. In front of the camera, Rotman transformed into Father Antonio—a respected and feared man with "the guile of a Machiavelli in the service of Christ."\(^4\)
4.6.2 MARÍA LUISA MANRIQUE DE LARA Y GONZAGA, THE COUNTESS DE PAREDES

Maria Luisa came from a prestigious royal bloodline. She was "the eldest daughter of a prince of the Holy Roman Empire, and her mother had descended from a famous family in the history and literature of Spain". She was the same age as Sor Juana. According to Sor Juana's poems, she was extremely beautiful. Judging from her actions, she was a woman of great energy and decisiveness. "We owe to the Countess the publication of Sor Juana's first collection, Inundación castálida". Her support and promotion of Sor Juana must have been discreet, sensitive, and intelligent. During her eight-year stay in Mexico Sor Juana experienced her most fertile writing period.

Maureen Ryan suggested that I contact Nancy Fox for this role. I had seen her perform at the Red Herring Theatre two years ago and was impressed with her physical life on the stage. She played several characters and for each she created distinct vocal and physical qualities. I was looking for a mature actress that would be able to seduce and command at the same time. I saw Maria Luisa as vulnerable, yet regal and poised. Nancy Fox created a believable Countess. Initially, she was a bit self-conscious, and struggled to maintain a lengthy six-minute uninterrupted seduction shot. The chemise she was wearing was difficult to unbutton. Once she exposed her breasts she found it difficult to proceed with the seduction without becoming pornographic. However, after a break, Birringer and I clarified her objective, and suggested ways that she could take her time undressing and using her eyes to seduce Sor Juana. After she was able to do some exploration, and became comfortable with Birringer's filming, she was able to drive the scene confidently and also be convincingly affected by Sor Juana's rejection.
4.6.3 THE MODERN ACTRESS

The modern actress is an intelligent, introspective woman. As she waits for her call to the film set, she reads one of Sor Juana's poems. She looks at her reflection in the dressing room mirror. She is dressed like Sor Juana. She remains silent, meditating on the poem she has just read.

I saw Sue Calligaris present a monologue for the Departmental winter auditions and was taken by her tall thin figure, her noble poise and her clear, crisp voice. Although Sue is Italian and does not speak fluent Spanish, after only several coaching sessions with me, she was able to deliver Sor Juana's complex poem with a flawless Argentinean-like pronunciation. During the shoot, she moved with ease, remained professional and focused. With little expository text, she was able to construct a compelling character for the closing scene. Dressed in the same habit the stage actress would be wearing, Calligaris became the rendered copy of Sor Juana I had envisioned--reserved, introspective and dignified in nature.

1 Krisztina Lengyel, his wife, also shot on location and assisted in the production.

2 Octavio Paz includes this letter in Sor Juana or, The Traps of Faith, Trans. Margaret Sayers Peden (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1988) 456-457

3 Paz 458

4 Paz 452.

5 Paz 148.

6 Paz 149.
CHAPTER 5

COYUNTURA: COLLABORATIVE ARTISTIC PROCESS

There were many individuals involved in the creation of Sueño: I will describe what role each played and how they or their design affected the process and/or the end product.

In the past I have been directed by four of the collaborators involved this time in the creation of Sueño: Sergio Rodríguez, René Peñaloza Galván, Johannes Birringer, and Jennifer Schlueter.¹ In this project, only Johannes Birringer crossed into other areas of collaboration. Besides exploring with me the staging of Sueño, I was fortunate to have him involved in three video shoots, in the final master edit and in the scenic design. Along with Eric Mayer, the stage manager, Birringer provided the technical set-up to develop and document the work during the rehearsal process and also throughout the actual run of the show.

I will begin by describing the creative model I aspired to emulate and what it actually became during a lengthy nine-month process. With the exception of video (discussed at length in Chapter 4), I will discuss five production components: the direction, the lighting design, the sound design, the costume design, and finally the scenic
design. Besides the occasional feedback given to me by Eric Mayer, the stage manager, Jim Croson, the sound designer and Maureen Ryan, my thesis advisor, most of the direction was devised by Johannes Birringer, Jennifer Schlueter and I. Under this section I explain how Johannes Birringer and Jennifer Schlueter complemented one another and Consequently, how they brought indispensable clarity and strength to my performance.

Sean Hennessy designed the lighting for the show and Jim Croson composed the music and created the sound design. In these sections I will address their artistic choices and how their particular design contributed to Sueño. However, since I am not technically knowledgeable in these areas, my description of their work will be at times a bit poetic in my attempt to capture what their compositions evoked. I also will mention moments when I felt the design interacted with the stage action or actively participated in the play’s narrative.

The section on costume design briefly explains how I created the Sor Juana habit and how Julia Weiss was involved in providing costuming for the film actors. Johannes Birringer and I rendered the scenic design. In this section I delineate what factors affected the design and list the set and hand props used. I also address here why Ran Berdichesky’s scientific sculpture was excluded from the stage design and how the lighting was hindered by the absence of a second wall drop.

5.1 THE CONCEPT OF COLLABORATION

The creation of Sueño developed as a collaborative process, but not quite like the model of coyuntura I had envisioned. Coyuntura is as an organic net-working model in which each member is a coordinate, a joint of equal ranking defined by his/her coordi

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relation to the other members/coordinates. The collective develops a common culture. The conceptual value rests in not defining the member's expertise, or aesthetic politics, but rather in valuing his/her position in relation to the collaborative Gestalt. In the coyuntura model, each coordinate affects the entire structure. Like in a net formation, the design evolves, emerges and organizes itself in a collective manner. The net does not break; it is supple. Amidst the necessary edits, it is able to make continuous adjustments, finding the harmony in its transformation.

On December 9th, 2002, I presented to the production team and to my thesis committee a well rehearsed staged reading of the script. Johannes Birringer came up with a general blocking. Since video, lighting and sound would be essential to the narrative, I asked Birringer to also help me with a preliminary multimedia set up so that the team and thesis committee could get a sense of the potential design interaction. Birringer rough-edited some video clips, compiled some musical samples and gave me direct light in four areas of the rehearsal stage.

More than just giving my audience a "sense" of the play, I desperately wanted them to be compelled by the material. I felt the density of the text made it so effortful for me to speak, and I could only imagine how unbearable it must have been to take in. However, the stage reading was overall successful. Afterwards, everyone from the team, including my advisor, remained in the studio. They gave me comments regarding their impression of the script. No logistics where discussed. We sipped on wine, ate a bit of cheese and olives, and were affected by each other's presence. My chest expanded, I was delighted. This is how I had always envisioned collaboration: Everyone in the same
room eating, drinking, weaving words, thoughts. I was not the center of attention, but I was the reason for the occasion of coming together. Unfortunately, we did not repeat this again.

Many factors impeded this framework from taking place. The project unfolded in several stages and locations. It would have been impossible to gather everyone involved in the creative process in the same room. The filmmakers with whom I collaborated in Mexico in the summer of 2002 never actually met the Columbus team. Even locally, we only met twice as a group. The net turned into a traditional wheel with a hub; each member became a supportive spoke, and I, the central axis.

The collaborators ranged in interest and commitment. Some participated out of pure creative passion and joy, and yet others did so to comply with a course accreditation or on a volunteer basis to save me from a dire situation. Despite the fact that we never found a true common culture, each of the collaborators influenced and shaped the work. The text or my recounting of the Sor Juana story went through their bodies and found a unique expression with each individual interpretation.

5.2 Devised Direction

Johannes Birringer creates aesthetically beautiful and compelling compositions. He usually constructs nonlinear, abstract dance-theatre narratives that are highly conceptual and challenging for American audiences. I have been conflicted by this in the past, since I come from a community theatre experience tailored for "el pueblo," the people. In community theatre it is imperative to find ways to create direct and humble engagement with the audience. Our difference in how we view our responsibility to the audience has
fed numerous discussions. In 1999, after further developing a piece we had presented in Houston, he invited me to perform with him at the Vogelfrei Festival in Darmstadt, Germany. I was thrilled to see how the material was received. To my surprise it triggered lengthy discussions throughout the evening not only amongst the artists that attended, but also with the mainstream of people who traveled several hours to be part of the cultural event. The German audience was not insulted by the abstraction, but was curiously ignited to piece together the equation in order to arrive at a personal significance.

In this collaboration, Birringer has contributed immensely, not only with his technical expertise, but most importantly in the realization of a multimedia contemporary work. Even though the script that I had written allowed for specific moments of video integration, the majority of it was lengthy uninterrupted monologues. After intense explorations, Birringer was able to suggest ways to alleviate the verbal density through the use of stylized choreography and abstract visual actions that counter pointed, interrupted, and deviated from an otherwise predictable dramatic direction. We began blocking a central upward and forward, horizontal, spiral topography. We decided to consciously create two patterns in response to the features of the stage design. The first pattern was a cross with a horizontal path extending from the desk to the aquarium. This was intersected by a vertical path which began down center stage and came up towards the audience. Their intersection marked the area where the critical events occurred in the character’s life: the physical abuse she experience as a child, her defense and her
downfall. The second pattern is a spiral around the desk and library on stage left. With the repetition of these patterns we attempted to evoke the contradictions of her position: at times the interrogator in power, at others the interrogated.

Once we laid out the topographical dialectic and the physical score for the character, my acting was still lacking. I had a path, a series of interesting tableaux, but I had filled them with general emotions, suggestive postures and attitudes. I did not feel I was telling the story, nor did I trust the text. Even though I was off-book by the second week of rehearsals, I could not muster the energy to drive through the entire length of the piece.

During the second half of my rehearsal process, Jennifer Schlueter became crucial to the work's development. I had previously been directed by Schlueter last year for the staged reading of *Time and The Beast* by Marina Shron. I remember not wanting to do the staged reading because I felt self-conscious and insecure about my reading skills. However, after our first rehearsal, I was impressed with how Schlueter's attention empowered me with confidence. In *Sueño* she became instrumental in identifying my core objective by pointing at key playable actions that could allow me the necessary impetus to drive through the lengthy rhetorical sections. She clarified Sor Juana's situational dichotomy, the fervent compulsive interrogator in control versus the desperate, persecuted and questioned subject. During the final week of rehearsal, Jennifer strengthened the transitions between scenes. She patiently encouraged me to explore with a variety of tactics. Also, she had identified critical beat changes that would secure during each performance the dramatic arc of the piece.
5.3 Lighting Design

Fig. 5.1 Design collage by Sean Hennessy

With elegant precision and deliberation, Sean Hennessy created a magical living environment. His design concept involved the evocation of concrete spaces like her cell, her library and the locutorio, as well as of the abstract expressionistic spaces for Sor Juana's intellectual journey.
His lighting design had an anthropomorphic quality. In the beginning of the play and in scenes when Sor Juana is in control, the light seemed to consciously justify and promote her brilliance and complexity. During Scene 2, when it is imperative that Sor Juana establish a rapport with her audience, Hennessy created the effect of a glowing intellectual, one that is the light source by which all objects and people in proximity come into existence. The lighting intensity that Hennessy chose not only illuminated, but ignited as well. In this scene, even though the audience is in awe of the character's eminence, the audience members are not alienated, but rather are contagiously infected with her presence. Later in Scene 3, when Sor Juana incriminates her audience and cynically implies that their naive belief system will not guarantee salvation, Hennessy accentuates her arrogant nature with harsh angles and shadows.

The light also toys with Sor Juana's fragile position or psychic reality. During her imaginary flights, Hennessy enables and strengthens her fantasies by saturating the space with vibrant colors and textures, such as the sea, a spiral, an evolving cross, a galaxy. During Scene 6, the light disappears, allowing Sor Juana to share with the audience a private encounter she had with Maria Luisa, the Countess.

In order to create a sense of place and support the historical events, Hennessy embraces the metaphor of the power of the Church. During the locutorio scenes, the light comes down on Sor Juana like raining shards representative of the attacks and criticisms she received during the latter period of her life. In the trial scene, Sor Juana finds herself framed within the four corners of a textured box. Behind her, Hennessy projects a large
canonic church window with which she must fight. Following this scene, Hennessy reinforces Sor Juana's dispossession by extinguishing each of the specials on her desk, chair and books as they are taken away. Coinciding with the fall of her once suspended books, Sor Juana finds herself in almost total darkness, with slivers of red light seeping through an illogical web of connected fissures. The light has abandoned her, but not her work. Hennessy slowly fades in a spiral onto the book she holds in her hands. The spiral is then replaced by a galaxy pattern, quietly confirming Sor Juana's achievement: immortality through her work.

Fig. 5.2 Spiral lighting design for water area, video still from scene 10
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Template Image</th>
<th>Gobo Name and Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Nimbusl and Altocumulus for Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Grating, Streaks, &amp; Linearl for Locutorio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Belfry for Court Window</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image5.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Reflected Water 3 for Center special surround template, and floor pattern wash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image6.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Breakups for 3.5x8x under cross, library corridor, and in court window</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig.5.3. Gobo templates used by Sean Hennessy, lighting designer
5.4 MUSIC COMPOSITION

Sound Tracks:
01 2:02  Prelude
02 2:08  Caracol
03 0:12  One Bell
04 1:12  Caracol Soft
05 1:10  Perfection
06 0:38  Voiceover of Poem
07 2:44  Countess
08 0:14  One Bell
09 1:36  Caracol Hair
10 1:04  Caracol Seizure
11 0:16  Echo
12 2:02  Postlude
13 2:03  Credits

James Croson convinced me that the caracol, the chambered nautilus should be the core metaphor for Sueño. Prior to meeting him, the central metaphor was going to be a bird that -- like phaeton -- transgressed its limitations by courageously flying into the sun. However, after I mentioned to Croson that Sor Juana had written a musical treatment titled "El caracol" he explained to me that the nautilus had inspired many of her Baroque contemporaries because of its mathematical configuration associated to metaphysical transcendence. Inspired by our talk, I did some in depth research on the little creature. I became fascinated it was not only more akin to Sor Juana's nature, but also to her Baroque mindset.
I had heard Croson's work before meeting him and was taken by his compositions' emotional intelligence. What I mean is that his music is emotionally distilled and evokes responses that are not visceral, but thoughtful and coming from afar. A Native American woman once told me that the longest and most difficult distance to bridge is the distance between the heart and the mind. I found that Croson's music did precisely that.

During the prelude, Croson evokes the play's 17th century Baroque Mexican culture. We are carried by the pleasant historical instrumentation of the lute, the vihuela, and the early organ. However, subtly we become aware that this history is being electro-acoustically mediated by a contemporary design. Structurally, we are also introduced to the period's aesthetic, which is that of proportional repetition of form, of mathematical harmony and rational symmetry.

Except for the prelude, and the film credit underscoring, the music that we hear represents the music that Sor Juana imagines and therefore lives. When she imagines the chambered nautilus in its habitat, drifting in the deepest waters of the sea, Croson aurally paints the scenario. The dense sea waters are heard in complete stillness until disturbed by passing creatures. The nautilus navigates through an unpredictable terrain devoid of light. We hear its advance, a steady glide created by jet propulsion of some kind that manages to leave no trace behind. Croson then evokes the creature's shape, a leitmotif that although it moves through the space in a direct path, it never stops recoils upon its self. Croson elicits the spiraling shell with an aural effect using a Risset glissando, an endless ascension in a scale like passage with constant feeding.

This caracol leitmotif reappears in four of the scenes. It is introduced in the Prelude during Sor Juana's discovery of the nautilus shell. As Sor Juana imagines the
shell's chambers, and attempts to decode the inscriptions on its walls, Croson mirrors the tactile sensation of touching the shell's engraved grooves with beautiful phrasing of plucking vihuela strings.

Gradually Sor Juana's identification with the nautilus becomes more obsessive. In Scene 8, Sor Juana unveils. She exposes her naked head in order to cleanse her infected mind. As she brushes violently, she imagines escaping the convent's confinements, like a nautilus ripping off its once protective shell and floating vulnerably naked in an enveloping hostile sea. The sea is representative of life's brutal and absurd existence. With church bell sounds Croson cites the past warnings and reprimands that Sor Juana must have endured. The bells are followed by organ music brushing back and forth like bristles on the naked head. Finally, a male choir with polyphonic music descends on Sor Juana like an overbearing fog.

A moment of liberation is suggested in the transition into Scene 6, the seduction encounter with Maria Luisa. We see Sor Juana with extended arms, like an arrow piercing the heavens. Behind her are clouds. We listen to the voice-over of a love poem underscored by the sound of wind. With her back to the audience she embraces herself creating the illusion of being caressed by an anonymous lover. During the seduction, Sor Juana is not able to consummate the intimate act with the Countess. Croson creates two opposing musical forces. The dominant force is played by an assertive vihuela (early Spanish guitar), against which the conflicted lute must resist. Their interplay not only reflects the dynamic between both women, but also Sor Juana's internal conflict, her mind versus her body. Her rational thoughts are violently attacked by her physical desire. The body attempts to override the perfect logical structure. The
mind arrested does not know how to respond. Croson's musical composition accurately captures the complexity of the situation with unpredictable musical phrases that come from different angles and from indiscernible origins. The musical exchanges are cautious and uncertain. The discomfort lingers; the lute withdraws and the conflict is resolved by the vihuela's reconsideration.

The final scene of the play contrasts the soaring polyphonic music previously heard in the library scene when Sor Juana evokes the presence of her maestros. By the end of the play the musical metaphor evolves to become an abstraction of Sor Juana herself. She no longer inhabits her body. She is all circumference with no center, a hollow shell. Inside her life's chambers, there is no perfection, only an ocean of silence, white noise.

5.5 COSTUME DESIGN

![Portrait of Sor Juana by Miguel Cabrera, 1750](image)

Fig. 5.4 Portrait of Sor Juana by Miguel Cabrera, 1750
I designed the Sor Juana costume. I based the design on the two existent paintings of Sor Juana. Both portraits were not painted from life. During my stay in Mexico City, I worked with a seamstress and after a week of heavy traveling to Xochimilco, where she resided, we completed the habit. I excluded the scapular to avoid any obvious and distasteful blasphemy. Also, I left out the large cumbersome chest shield because aesthetically, it interrupted the vertical flow of the black fabric, and because it could potentially be distracting due to its reflective quality. I decided to be barefoot because I envisioned Sor Juana silently gliding through the space with the habit smoothly trailing along the floor. The modern film Sor Juana in scene 10 wears this same costume. The other film actors--Father Antonio and Maria Luisa, used costumes that were assembled from past departmental productions. I met with Julia Weiss and explained who the characters were as well as the nature of the scenes. She was very helpful and generous with her time. She pulled out several costume history books and explained to me what period garments would be most appropriate. We set a follow-up meeting and efficiently gathered all the garments.

5.6 SCENIC DESIGN

Johannes Birringer and I created the scenic design. There were several considerations that had to be factored into the design: aesthetic value, function, budget, construction, and operational feasibility.

**Aesthetic value**: Inspired by a painting of Remedios Varo (See Figure 5), we were drawn to the color ochre and the natural textures it elicited. I imagined using earthy textures like
sand, crystal, water, wood, shell, paper. The design would have to not only support the play's narrative and create the overall spatial environment, but also would complement, localize and connect all the other multimedia design elements.

Function: The spatial design or environment needed to support four physical spaces: the cell with a library, the locutorio, the courtroom, and the well. Furthermore, it needed to accommodate the projection of the filmic spaces of memory, dream and intellectual fantasy.

Budget: $200

Construction: The Departmental Main Stage productions have priority. The MFA new works production is at the disposition of an unsupervised GTA that can potentially be unwilling and unreliable in the construction's expediency. However, if the MFA actor is self-motivated, and the Scene Shop has the materials at hand, she can complete the requested tasks herself.

Operational feasibility: The MFA new works production is provided with a limited run crew: 1 lighting console operator, 1 sound console operator, 1 stage hand. Because Sueño was part of a double bill, striking the elements and setting up for the next performance had to be managed within a 15 minute interval. If the production is more complex, and if the MFA actor is allowed to, then s/he can recruit his/her own volunteers.

After careful study of the above mentioned, Birringer and I decided to go with the most simple, elegant, but compelling design. The floor would be painted with textured grays in order to demarcate the playing space and aid the lighting design. Two huge textured ocher wall drops would be hung and nearly taped to the edge. The textured
backdrop would create an uneven video projection surface representative of Sor Juana’s mindspace. On stage left would be situated her cell, with a desk, a chair with a tall back, and a glass scientific sculpture. On top of the desk would be some props used in the play: several piles of loose manuscripts, a book, a quill, a glass bowl with olives, a leaf pattern and a box with Maria Luisa’s strands of hair. To suggest her immense collection of books, we would have four suspended books across the right wall and in ascending order like a pyramid. At the end of Scene 9, when her cell is evacuated, the stage hands would wheel off the table and remove the chair and the scientific instruments. The suspended books would simultaneously drop to the ground and there would be no need to strike them since there will be no light on them then. On stage right would be situated a mutable space. Here we would have a tall aquarium filled with water and a bit of settled sand. Buried in the sand would be a large nautilus shell. Behind the aquarium would be hidden the brush, towel and scroll. The aquarium would have a sturdy lid for me to sit on. The lid would only partially cover the top and could easily be removed for Scenes 1, 3, 8 and 10. The aquarium would be seated on a base with wheels to be easily removed during the 15 minute intermission. Beside it would be a small, but sturdy three-sided wooden box. It would serve as a step and as a place for Sor Juana to hide her last book. This book is representative of her own published works. I would need to have pre-drilled holes on the book so that I am able to sew it shut with a red thread and needle in the final scene.

Two set elements could not be incorporated: the second side wall drop and the glass scientific sculpture created by Ran Berdichesky. Even though both drops were painted in a timely manner, we could not use the side drop on stage left because we did not have a black curtain to conceal it for the second show in the double bill, K-nowhere.
to run, no-w-here to Hide performed by Kenderick Hardy. Consequently, I felt that the cell could not be spatially contained. Hennessy's light specials on the suspended books did not read well against the black wall and the whole sensation of a "library" or library-laboratory was not totally evoked.

To dramatize Sor Juana's dispossession by the Church, Scene 9 required that all her belongings be struck out of the stage. The Department granted one stage hand per show. Eric Mayer, the stage manager was able to secure two more volunteers to assist with this difficult scene transition. I wanted the striking of the set to be executed with the least distraction and utmost efficiency. However, even after several rehearsals and with the added help, this transition felt awkward. Thinking that eliminating an extra trip by the stage hands to clear Berdichsky's sculpture would alleviate the problem, I decided to exclude the sculpture from the design. However, this problem was not scenically resolved. We were not able to successfully establish Scene 9's violent evacuation and radical change in Sor Juana's life circumstances. I did not figure out how to technically accomplish this. Perhaps it is a flaw inherent to the script itself. I still do not know.

Fig. 5.5 Berdichsky's design of a fictional scientific instrument
Fig. 5.6 Drawing of the scenic design, January 2003

1 See appendix A, my extended vita for specifics.

2 I have borrowed the term coyuntura from the Zapatista Resistance movement in Chiapas, Mexico (1994 to present). When I lived in Austin, Texas I was intimately involved and supported the Zapatista cause. After taking several of their group awareness workshops, I came to realize that this arrangement of minds generated more strength and creativity then a hierarchical structure.
CHAPTER 6

THE PRODUCTION

In this chapter I would like to address the challenges I encountered during the rehearsal process and production of the show, Sueño, shared the playbill with Kenderick Hardy's spoken-word poetry drama K-nowhere to run, no-w-hereto Hide. Both productions were scheduled to be performed at the black box theatre in Mount Hall on West Campus. Since Sueño was technically more complicated we arranged that it go in the first hour, and K-nowhere to run, no-w-hereto Hide would follow after a ten minute intermission.

Both teams had the advantage of being able to move into the theatre about three weeks before the opening. Rehearsal time was divided between our team and Kenderick Hardy's team. This left us time to become acquainted with the space and prepare the technical production. The final dress rehearsal on March 3 was open to the public, and then our performances were shown every night from March 4 through March 8, including a matinee performance on the final day of the run. I was able to help with the promotion of the play, and we also announced the premiere over the internet, using a specially constructed website (in three languages) as reference point for further information.

(http://www.aliennationcompany.com/gallery/sueno.htm)
Two production meetings took place early in the process. During our first meeting both Kenderick and I presented an abstract of our work, a set design, a prop list and also made specific equipment requests. At the second meeting, we negotiated on a basic floor plan to define the audience’s sitting arrangement.

Even though a production structure was in place I failed to understand how to access departmental resources. I became frustrated with the lack of clarity as to who was specifically responsible for following-up with technical and production tasks. For example, no media equipment was installed in Mount Hall, thus interactive rehearsals with the film scenes could not be carried out there. For the first half of the rehearsal period (including the staged reading in December 2002) the work was mostly developed at the Experimental Intermedia Studio in Sullivan Hall (Dance Department), where theatre lighting, video projectors, computers, and sound systems were available for integration of media elements into the rehearsal and exploration process. Rehearsals at the Drake did not take place in the New Works lab as I had anticipated. I did not understand why an undergraduate student thesis project had secured the space and was somehow given preference over the MFA New Works. We rehearsed in the lecture room 2038. It is not an acting space. The tables and chairs had to be pushed to the back wall and its small dimensions and neon lighting never conveyed a true sense of the playable dimensions. When we rehearsed here I focused on small segments of the play, and only in acting choices instead of movement-design or media problem-solving.

The production demands were unevenly distributed. Often, Eric Mayer, a most reliable and precise stage manager and I had to jump through several hoops in order to have access to departmental resources. I did address all foreseeable technical requests in a
list of props and electronic equipment, tasks with corresponding deadlines and an elaborate scenic design. I gave documentation to the appropriate faculty. However, I never got any feedback. I assumed that the requests would be feasible, had been approved and would be executed in a timely fashion. Instead, I found out that there is no standard protocol as to how orders were executed. Even after I insisted and explained my requests to several people I saw no visible results. I realized I could not rely on the Department's resources. I decided to go ahead and complete the tasks myself or via my collaborators. We had to bring in our own personal equipment, or check it out with a limited time frame from Lord Hall or borrow it from the Dance Department.

As opening night approached it became extremely stressful to negotiate or to compensate for technical shortcomings. For example, Sean Hennessy and I finished painting the stage floor at 1:00 a.m. because the assigned GTA (with several students at her disposal) was unwilling to fit it into her schedule. Several times in the middle of the night, Sarah Reese had to sneak into Professor Boord's video lab so that she could edit the two scenes she shot for the show and transfer them into DVD format.

Integrating all the design elements in a multimedia piece requires extra rehearsal time we did not have. The situation was exacerbated during the last week of our rehearsal period. I had promised Hennessy we would dedicate a scene-by-scene work session to test light placements. However, with Robert Post's visit, I was required to perform a full run for him. This incident pushed back our progress and deprived Hennessy of several nights of sleep. I, too, was exhausted. Although I was working incessantly (in addition to rehearsing every day, I was organizing press coverage and reception logistics.) I realized we were way behind schedule. The one dress rehearsal night we had to feel the flow of
the show was plagued with technical problems. On Sunday, fortunately, and against
official company rules, Mayer, Hennessy, Schlueter and Birringer agreed to do a scene-
by-scene run in order to identify and correct all problem areas along the way.

Still, as Hennessy comments in his evaluation, "The fluidity of cueing I hoped to
achieve did not seem to be effective, for a number of reasons. The first was the
interaction with the performer, who seemed to occasionally lack the consistency
necessary to perfect the multi-step cueing leading into and out of many of the scenes.
Secondly, I did not have enough time to test these cues during tech and dress. As a
general comment on the scheduling, it seems that the tech and dress rehearsal period is
such a crunch time, an extra evening of tech, or a third dress rehearsal would greatly
improve the designer's ability to refine the work as necessary."

The traditional "Afterwards" feedback session that usually is integrated into every
show was cancelled without prior notice. Was this overlooked or dismissed as
unnecessary? If the Department opted to cancel it, would hearing people's feedback not
benefit the authors of the new works?

Even though the politics in regards to resources and organization made me
resentful for having my team bear unnecessary weight, I will not deny the department’s
support. I was privileged to having been assigned a fabulous lighting designer and stage
manager. Also I was provided with an indispensable full set of lighting instruments that
allowed for Sean Hennessy's intricate design. The production situation that I described
has given me a real sense of what it takes to produce a show of this complexity,
especially if a new work is designed to include multimedia and digital processing.
Most importantly, I have learned that creating a work of this nature implies that the actor will need to rehearse with the media in order to develop the performance with all integrated elements.

### Video/Audio List

Rehearsals from 1/30-2/3, 2/6-9 will take place at Sullivant Hall Studio V. Electronic and lighting equipment will be provided at this location.

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<tr>
<td>As of 2/10, rehearsals will take place at Mount Hall &amp; a provisional video projector will be necessary.</td>
<td>Feb. 10th</td>
<td>Request from theatre dept.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 LCD Video projector (min. 1500 luminance)</td>
<td>Feb. 26</td>
<td>Request theatre projector (Dan Boord)</td>
</tr>
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<td>2 VGA cables 25 feet each</td>
<td>Feb. 26</td>
<td>Request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 G4 Macintosh laptop with DVD drive</td>
<td>Feb. 26</td>
<td>Request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For playback of video source, or a simple DVD.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lens cap device to cover lens cap</td>
<td>Feb. 26</td>
<td>Construct (Johannes will construct device)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 projector platform</td>
<td>Feb. 26</td>
<td>Request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loudspeakers</td>
<td>Feb. 26</td>
<td>Request</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amplifier</td>
<td>Feb. 26</td>
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<td>Mixer</td>
<td>Feb. 26</td>
<td>Request</td>
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<td>CD-Player</td>
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<td>1 microphone</td>
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### Set/Scenic List

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<tr>
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<td>Aquarium box (water, sand)</td>
<td>Feb. 26</td>
<td>Shanda investigating price &amp; attainability</td>
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<td>Table</td>
<td>Feb. 26</td>
<td>Request</td>
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<td>Chair</td>
<td>Feb. 26</td>
<td>Request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candle and holder</td>
<td>Feb. 26</td>
<td>Request</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wall + Floor treatment</td>
<td>Feb. 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suspended old books</td>
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Table 6.1 Video/Audio and prop list submitted to the Department
CHAPTER 7

THE FEEDBACK

Even though I received little substantial feedback from the Department's faculty and from peers, I am satisfied with the outcome of the work. Those interested in staying after the performance during run of the show took the time to comment and convey their thoughts about Sueño, and they confirmed our collaborative success. After every performance, either in the lobby or in the bathroom/dressing room, I was approached by elated audience members and collaborators. I quote from a few of the written responses I received:

"Angeles, Thank you so much for letting me be a part of your production. I enjoyed working with you. You have so much energy and work well with so many types of people. I really think the way you integrated all design areas worked stupendously."

Sarah Reese, Collaborator—Filmmaker.

"Dear Angeles, Thank you so much for Sueño! Your performance had a confidence and sense of purpose that was most impressive. From the nautilus shell to floating hands to submerged text, you took me on a fascinating journey. The shell becomes the filmic totem through which the memories are retrieved—and through death, there is life—very Mexican perhaps."

--Lesley Ferris, the Chair of the Theatre Department

"Clark and I were very moved (in different ways) by Sueño. What an extraordinary piece in that it's both historical and also very contemporary. The sober staging opened up into a third dimension with great film/video shots with multi-geographical locations. What a tour-de-force Angeles! The nuances and metamorphoses of your personality in voice, bodily and facial expression and costuming were great. It was amazing how you were able to sustain this extended 'monologue.' On the other hand you constructed the dramaturgy so efficiently that it enabled you to carry it through [. . .]."

--Vera Maletic, Professor Emerita, Department of Dance
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

As I sit here writing this conclusion, I come to realize the magnitude of Sueño, the project I submitted a year ago for Departmental approval and grant consideration. It has taken the entire year to complete its conceptual development, its various stages of production and realization. I traveled twice to Mexico and completed four video shoots, two of which took place in important historical locations. Locally we constructed film sets and executed 4 video shoots. I was able to film my own hand going through the pages of an actual First Edition of Sor Juana's printed works (in Austin). Ten incredibly talented collaborators were intimately involved in the artistic process. Within a three-week period I was able to cast three actors who convincingly constructed their characters and became living projections instrumental to the dramatic narrative.

Sueño challenged my personal self image and my ability to creatively arrive at decisions and commit to them fully. My advisor once told that my tendency to add new untested material during a performance is due to a subconscious fear to commit to decisions made regarding my character's circumstances. If I added new material during a performance, I could always factor this new element as causing my failure. The tendency
comes from not trusting the tested choices made during rehearsal. I needed the extra uncertainty to help me try harder to stay in the moment, and be fresh and interesting. She told me to stop doing this. Instead I should invest and commit to stronger choices based on thorough study of the text. If I failed at least I would know why, and I could strengthen my choices in the future. For Sueño, everything had to be perfectly timed, cued, interconnected. Many people depended on my choices in terms of how, when and where I delivered the text. The film characters did not work off of me. I worked off them. As the piece evolved, I found that my timing had changed drastically and that the video sequences and music had to adjust to me. Almost until the final moments of tech rehearsal, did we have to re-edit the video sequences and music. All these changes and decisions were executed. Anne Bogart calls making choices the "necessary violence" in the creative act. They are violent because they eliminate all other potential solutions. "The decisiveness, the cruelty, which has extinguished the spontaneity of the moment, demands that the actor begin an extraordinary work: to resurrect the dead. The actor must now find a new, deeper spontaneity within this set form."¹ I had to "resurrect" the material by finding the freedom while living within the repeated choices of a constraining cueing frame-- 72 lighting cues, 10 video cues and 13 sound cues.

The creation of Sueño allowed me to investigate an important question in regards to the use of media in performance. "Can the use of media in performance suggest a world that unfolds, overlaps, blossoms like the nature of thought itself as it seems to grow out of the center of another thought and to embrace another, more distant thoughts and feelings?" And my answer is yes, it can. Sueño mediated my ability to exceed physical, spatial and temporal limitations. The crossing of filmic, theatrical and sonic spaces in the
mixed reality of the performance reflected on the integration of what I would call "virtual" techniques, which in this case allowed me to represent the wide range of my character's mindspace and imagination. Interactive media changes our idea of the theatrical image and allows a more complex, layered, poly-sensory experience of physical and abstract spaces.

1 Anne Bogart, "Six things I know about actor training," Maska vol. 17 (winter 2002), 119.
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Colombi, Beatriz. "Homenaje a Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz a 300 años de su muerte. La Respuesta y sus vestidos: Tipos discursivos y redes de poder". Mora, no. 2 (Noviembre 1996) Facultad de Filosofía y Letras. Universidad de Buenos Aires.


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The Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz Project. Dartmouth College. The Department of Spanish and Portuguese http://www.dartmouth.edu/~sorjuana/

Audiovisuals

Yo la peor de todas: I, the worst of all. / una produccion de GEA Cinematografica ; guion cinematografico, Maria Luisa Bemberg, Antonio Larreta ; produccion ejecutiva, Gilbert Marouani ; produccion, Lita Stantic ; direccion, Maria Luisa Bemberg. New York, NY : First Run Features : First Run Features Home Video, (1990).

"Nautilus" film adapted from "The Shape of Life", Chp. 6, "Survival,' DVD, Sea Studios Foundation. 2001.

For my critical interpretation of Sor Juana's life and work, I am also indebted to Verónica Grossi's unpublished dissertation on Sor Juana, as well as to helpful suggestions by Catriona Esquivel regarding contemporary plays and fiction written on the subject, including Elena Portillo Trambley's Sor Juana (Ypsilanti, Michigan: Bilingual Press, Eastern Michigan University); Alicia Gaspar de Alba's Juana Inés, in Growing up Chicana/o: An Anthology, Ed. Tiffany Ana Lopez (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc. 1993) pp 69-85; and Alicia Gaspar de Alba, Excerpts from the Sapphic Diary of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Frontiers Vol.XII, no. 3, p.p. 109-114.
Appendix A: Extended Vita
VITA

Romero was born on the Mexican-American border and has been raised in two cultures. She now resides in Columbus, OH and is an actor, writer and activist whose work meditates on the new lexicon of contemporary Latino culture and its junction with other cultures. She began her career performing in the streets. This unprotected environment led her interest into exploring alternative environments in site-specific works and multimedia performance-installations. Ultimately, regardless of the environment, her commitment remains the same-- the creation of coyuntura spaces where dialogue within ourselves and with others is possible and can lead us into a stronger sense of truth about our humanity. Presently, she is obtaining her M.F.A. in Acting (Independent Track) at OSU. She is also a member of AlienNation Company.

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<tr>
<td>BA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Science/Latin American Studies</td>
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<td>THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY</td>
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| Suzuki                |
| Jeanine Thompson & SITI Company |
| 2002                  |

| Marcel Marceau        |
| Mime                  |
| 2001                  |

| Johannes Birringer    |
| Use of Technology in Theatre |
| 1998                  |

| Sharon Grady          |
| Augusto Boal Method (Theatre in Education) |
| 1996                  |

| Deborah Hay Dance Co. |
| Movement Deconstruction and Improvisation |
| 1994                  |

| India                 |
| Traveled 8 months throughout the country. |
| 1993                  |

| Ofelia Medina         |
| Voice support and Intentionality |
| 1992                  |

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<td><strong>Finally a Place</strong></td>
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<td>Co-Star</td>
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<td>Dir: Serena Lin</td>
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<td>2002</td>
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| **Una Aventura**      |
| Lead                  |
| Dir: René Peñaloza-Galván |
| 2002                  |

| **RECORDS**           |
| Co-Star               |
| Dir: René Peñaloza-Galván |
| 1999                  |

| **Trails**            |
| Lead                  |
| Dir: Johannes Birringer |
| 1999                  |
Dear Anne  Lead  Dir: René Peñaloza-Galván  1998
Centzonotle  Lead  Dir: David Walding  1997
La Llorona  Lead  Dir: David Esquenazi  1997
Q'aria Sin Maria  Lead  Dir: David Esquenazi  1996
An Ivory Tower  Lead  Dir: Sergio Rodríguez  1990

THEATRE & PERFORMANCE INSTALLATIONS

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<tr>
<td>St. Joan of the Stockyards</td>
<td>Slif</td>
<td>Thurber Theatre</td>
<td>OSU (L. Ferris)</td>
<td>2002</td>
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<td>Time and the Beast</td>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>New Works Lab</td>
<td>OSU (J. Schlueter)</td>
<td>2002</td>
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<td>Embers</td>
<td>Narrator</td>
<td>The Power Center</td>
<td>MSU (J.Birringer)</td>
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<td>Caminhando</td>
<td>Puppeteer</td>
<td>Sullivant Theatre</td>
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<td>Camille</td>
<td>Thurber Theatre</td>
<td>OSU (J.Thompson)</td>
<td>2001</td>
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<td>Beautiful View</td>
<td>Sonia</td>
<td>Wexner Perf. Space</td>
<td>(Dada Kamera)</td>
<td>2001</td>
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<td>Alchemy of Desire</td>
<td>Simon</td>
<td>Mount Hall</td>
<td>OSU (Caridad Svich)</td>
<td>2001</td>
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<td>Carmenland</td>
<td>Diva</td>
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<td>(P.Hoffbauer)</td>
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<td>Sounding of Chakras</td>
<td>The Cook</td>
<td>Candy Factory</td>
<td>(E. Fullman/L.Montano)</td>
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<td>My Heart</td>
<td>Death</td>
<td>Helm F.A. Theatre</td>
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<td>1995</td>
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<td>Cuauhtemoc y Eulalia</td>
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<td>Cuauhtemoc</td>
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PERSONAL WORKS

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<td>MIRAk</td>
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<td>TX</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between the places</td>
<td>Flor</td>
<td>DiverseWorks</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td>1998</td>
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<tr>
<td>La mujer Zapatista</td>
<td>Zapatista</td>
<td>Ruta Maya CSChM</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td>1996</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amando menos Cero</td>
<td>Fem. Impersonator</td>
<td>La Peña</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td>1996</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Day of the Dead</td>
<td>Catrina</td>
<td>La Peña</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td>1995</td>
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<tr>
<td>Macorina</td>
<td>Macorina</td>
<td>Chicago House</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malincheuca</td>
<td>Malinche On tour</td>
<td>IL, WA, MO, TX</td>
<td>1997-1994</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SKILLS: Fluent in Spanish & Italian, Martial Artist.

Artist Residencies
Taught 2 workshops at UNCG "Exploring Text & Movement Using Viewpoints" 2002
Taught 1yr. long Creative Writing course to elementary & middle school students with Writers in the Schools 2000
Wrote the script and performed in Mirak by AlienNation Co. for a DiverseWorks Theatre residency 1999
Directed/devised Alter the Altar, a piece that derived from an Austin ISD. Six-week intensive workshop. Allowed 15 participating middle school students to explore and express their own myths in two public performances. 1996

Festivals
Frida Kahlo in El entrecfno/The Brow at the Latin Arts Fest & Women’s History Month in Greensboro, NC 2002
Narrator in Embers at the American College Dance Festival (Dance Technology Forum) in Ann Arbor, MI 2002
Arafonsina in Fishgarden at the Vogelfrei III Festival in Darmstadt, Germany 1999
Organica in North by South at Fringe Dance Performance Festival for DiverseWorks, Houston, TX 1998
Malinchuca at the Festival de Libre Enganche for Jump-Start Performance Co. 1997
Malinchuca at the 2nd Annual Nahual Festival, CSCM in Austin, TX in San Antonio, TX 1996
Malinchuca at the Women’s Festival for Women and Their Work Gallery in Austin, TX 1996

Commissioned Works
El entrecfno for Mexi-carce Museum & La Peña Arts Organization 1998
A las Cinco te Desmayo for La Peña Arts Organization 1998
Amano Menos Cero for La Peña Arts Organization 1996
Malinchuca for Mexi-carce Museum 1994

Costume Design
Mirak by AlienNation Co for DiverseWorks at DiverseWorks Theater 1999
Watsonville by Cherrie Moraga for Frontera Theater Co. at Hyde Park Theater 1998
Day of the Dead Celebration for La Peña at Chicago House 1995
Exit/Voilé for Deborah Hay Dance Company at Public Domain Theater 1995
My Heart, a Contemporary Prayer for Deborah Hay Dance Co. Helms FA Theatre 1995
Community Service
Project Coordinator for *Body Count*, a Day Without Art performance --1000 estimated participants. 1996

Affiliations
Founding member of *Teatro Comunitario en Español* (TCE), a community based theatre composed of Latinos of diverse cultural, social and economical backgrounds. TCE’s mission was to provide the Hispanic community with a tool for cultural identification and expression.

Core member of *AlienNation Company*, a collaborative group of artists from diverse disciplines committed to the creation and exploration of multimedia performances. 1997

Grants awarded in 2002
The Tinker Field Research Grant, Alumni Grant for Graduate Research & Scholarship, & The Coca Cola Critical Difference for Women (Grants for Research on Woman, Gender and Gender Equity.)
Nominated for the Graduate Associate Teaching Award in 2002.

Website address: [http://www.aliennationcompany.com/gallery/sueno.htm](http://www.aliennationcompany.com/gallery/sueno.htm)
Appendix B: Publicity Poster
department of theatre
presents

MFA NEW WORKS
Mount Hall Studio Theatre
March 4-8, 2003

Knowhere to run, no-w-her to Hide
A Spoken Word Poetry Drama
Created and Perforned by Kendrick Hardy

SUEÑO
Created and Perforned by
Angelas Romero

Presented as part of a year-long series of events in celebration of the Hispanic Student Special Event Series.

Contact the University Theatre Box Office at 292-2295 of theatre@osu.edu for tickets.
Also available at the Wexner Center and all TICKETMASTEt outlets.

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Appendix C: Bilingual press release
Sueño
A new work written and performed by Angeles Romero

March 4 at 7:30 pm
March 5-7 at 8 pm
March 8 at 2 pm & 8 pm

Studio Theatre at Mount Hall 1050 Carmack Road
http://www.osu.edu/map/linkbuildings/mounthall.html

For ticket information 614/292-2295    Theatre-tix@osu.edu

This performance is also part of a year long series of events in celebration of the Hispanic Student Services’ Silver Jubilee and its legacy of student support and cultural enrichment.

Sueño is a 60 min. multimedia play that focuses on the life of 17th Century Mexican nun, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Sor Juana is widely known in Latin America and in Spain. Her fame stems from her voracious drive for knowledge and her exceptional genius as a writer. From her silent solitary cell, this free-thinking nun conducted scientific experiments, wrote hundreds of poems, plays, as well as theological essays. She was frequently attacked and chose to defend not only her own interest in worldly learning, but also the broad rights of women to education and a life of the mind. With video, light and sound sculptors, Sueño evokes realities in the intellectual mindscape of Sor Juana—a world that borders on a continuous sliding between concrete experiences, intellectual exercises and psychological hallucinations.


Sponsored by the Department of Theatre

e l 4 de marzo a las 7:30 pm
del 5 al 8 de marzo a las 8 pm
el 8 de marzo a las 2 pm

Teatro Estudio en Mount Hall 1050 Carmack Road
http://www.osu.edu/map/linkbuildings/mounthall.html

Para venta de boletos llame al 614/292-2295    Theatre-tix@osu.edu

Esta presentación es parte de un serie de eventos que se llevarán cabo durante todo el año por parte de la organización Hispanic Student Services quién celebra este año su aniversario de plata, Silver Jubilee con una tradición de apoyo estudiantil y enriquecimiento cultural.

Sueño, es una obra de teatro multimedia que trata de la vida de la monja mexicana del siglo 17º, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Sor Juana es conocida en Latinoamérica y en España. Su fama se debe a su intelecto voraz y a su genio excepcional como escritora. Desde su celda solitaria y silenciosa, esta monja libre pensadora condujo experimentos científicos, escribió numerosos poemas, obras de teatro y tratados teológicos. Fue atacada frecuentemente y escogió defender no sólo sus propios intereses sino también el derecho que tiene toda mujer hacia el estudio y una vida intelectual. Esta obra reforza su manejo extraordinario de la palabra, la complejidad de su poesía y sus admirables confrontaciones con la autoridad patriarcal. Con esculturas de video, iluminación y sonido, Sueño evoca realidades que se encuentran en el espacio mental de Sor Juana.


Patrocinado por la Facultad de Teatro
de la Universidad del Estado de Ohio

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Appendix D: Program and insert
MFA NEW WORKS
Mount Hall Studio Theatre
March 4-8, 2003

Knowhere to run,
nowhere to hide

A Spoken Word Poetry Drama
Created and Performed by
Kendrick Hardy

Sueño

Written and Performed by
Angelos Romero
SUEÑO
Dedicated to Elena, written and performed by Angeles Romero
Staging devised by Johannes Birringer, Angeles Romero and Jennifer Schlueter

Father Antonio ............................................................... Brian Rotman
Maria Luisa Countess of Paredes .................................... Nancy Fox
Modern Adress ............................................................. Sue Calligan

Stage Manager .............................................................. Eric H. Mayer
Lighting Designer .......................................................... Sean Hennessy
Costume and Prop Designer ........................................ Angeles Romero and Julie Weiss
Sculptography .............................................................. Angeles Romero and Johannes Birringer
Scientific Sculpture ....................................................... Ran Bareichesky
Music Composer ........................................................... James Croson
Technical Director ......................................................... Chad Ishan
Light Board Operator .................................................... Brian Oemberger
Sound Board Operator .................................................. Andrea Culpepper
Video Operator ............................................................ Eric H. Mayer
Set Run Crew .............................................................. Daniel Nash, Rebecca J. Rhinehart, Joey Schultz

Photography by Johannes Birringer, Katolina Gujarez, Kristina Longyle, René Pertiaga Galván, Sarah Reese, Sergio Rodriguez and Angeles Romero.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT
Sueño is a multimedia play that focuses on the life of 17th Century Mexican nun, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Sor Juana is widely known in Latin America and in Spain. Her fame stems from her voracious drive for knowledge and her exceptional genius as a writer. From her silent solitary cell, this free-thinking nun conducted scientific experiments, wrote hundreds of poems, plays, as well as theological essays. She was frequently attacked and chose to defend not only her own interest in worldly learning, but also the broad rights of women to education and a life of the mind. With video, light and sound sculptures, Sueño evokes realities in the intellectual mind space of Sor Juana—a world that borders on a continuous sliding between concrete experiences, intellectual exercises and psychological hallucinations.

MFA Thesis Committee: Assistant Professor Maureen Murphy (Chair), Assistant Professor Catriona Esquivel, Associate Professor Mary Tarantino.

This performance was made possible through the generous support of The Ohio State University, Theatre Department, The Graduate School (Alumni Grant for Graduate Research & Scholarship), The Department of Women's Studies (the Coca Cola Critical Difference for Women Grant for Research on Women, Gender and Gender Equity) and the Center for Latin American Studies (Tinker Foundation Field Research Award). It is presented as part of a year long series of events in celebration of the Hispanic Student Services' Silver Jubilee.

SPECIAL THANKS
Mil Gracias a San Juanita Alcalá, Cecilia Coloné, Alejandro Flores, Gail Griffin, and Robert Post.
K-NOWHERE TO RUN, NO-WHERE TO HIDE
Created and Performed by Kenderick Hardy
Featuring Choreography by Marsha Woody

Stage Manager ................................................................. Brandon Lewis
Lighting Designer ............................................................ Anjeanette Stokes
Sound Designer ............................................................... Michael Buchman
Technical Director ........................................................... Chad Mahan
Lighting Board Operator .................................................. Brian Obermeyer
Follow Spot Operator ....................................................... Joey Schultz
Sound Board Operator ...................................................... Andre Cuypers
Set Crew ........................................................................ Daniel Nash, Rebecca J. Rhinehart

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

I have categorized this play as a Spoken Word Poetry Drama.

In the summer of 2000 I found that I had a wealth of poetic material, so I compiled, shaped and recorded seventeen pieces. Five of these original works were then selected for Apollo's Poetics, a CD which was co-produced by me and my life mentor, Dr. Tommie "Tonea" Stewart.

Apollo, Greek God and son of Zeus, is associated with the sun, energy and light! He is also known as the God of Poetry, Sound, and Prophecy. In the same way that the Greeks saw poetry and music as the core of their culture, poetry and music are at the core of my work.

The work I wrote for Apollo's Poetics serves as the nucleus of tonight's performance. This Spoken Word Poetry, a mixture of fictional and autobiographical material, uses multiple characters to tell a story - a story of life on the edge, life in the words, life as poetry. The central character, Kahlib, is perhaps my alter-ego and it is through him that I am able to delve into my life and make connections to who I am.

Copies of my Spoken Word Poetry Album, Apollo's Poetics, accompanied by the eclectic sound score by Byron Thomas, are available in the lobby.

MFA Thesis Committee: Associate Professor Jeantie Thompson (Chair), Associate Professor Anthony Hill, Associate Professor Bebe Miller.

SPECIAL THANKS

I would like to like to thank Marsha Woody-Hardy, Jackie Paris, Kristen Hilkerl, Betsy Pandora, my Thesis Committee: Jeantie Thompson, Dr. Anthony Hill, and Bebe Miller, Dr. Tommie "Tonea" Stewart, Robert Post, and Katie Whillock.

There will be one 15-minute intermission.
Audio and visual recording devices are prohibited in the theatre.
In consideration of the actors, please turn off all cellular phones and beepers.

Both projects presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Fine Arts in Acting at the Ohio State University.
VOICE OVER OF EXCERPT HEARD AT THE
END OF THE PIERCING THE HEAVENS SCENE
ONE OF THE LOVE POEMS THAT
SOR JUANA WROTE TO MARIA LUISA,
THE COUNTESS OF PAREDES.

...del mismo corazón
los combatientes deseos,
on holocausto poluto,
són materiales afectos,
y solamente del alma
en religiosos incendios,
arde sacrificio puro
de adoración y silencio.
...Ser mujer, ni estar ausente,
no es de amarte impedimento;
pues sabes tú, que las almas
distancia ignoran y sexo.

SONNET HEARD IN VIDEO AND
READ ON STAGE ON THE FINAL SCENE.

Este, que ves, engaño colorido,
que del arte ostentando los primores,
con falsos silogismos de colores
es cauteloso engaño del sentido;
éste, en quien la lisonja ha pretendido
excusar de los años los horrores,
y venciendo del tiempo los rigores
triunfar de la vejez y del olvido,
es un vano artificio del cuidado,
es una flor al viento delicada,
es un resguardo inútil para el hado:
es una necia diligencia errada,
es un afán caduco y, bien mirado,
es cadáver, es polvo, es sombra, es nada.

Originating in the heart,
desire, in discord and dissension,
kindles tainted holocausts,
fires of bodily affection,
and only when born of the soul may
the pure flame of consecration
blaze brightly in religious fires
of silence and of adoration.
...There is no obstacle to love in gender or
in absence
for souls,
as you are well aware
transcend both sex and distance.

This that you gaze on, colorful deceit,
that so immodestly displays art's favors,
with its fallacious arguments of colors
is to the senses cunning counterfeit,
this on which kindness practiced to
delete from cruel years accumulated
horrors,
constraining time to mitigate its rigors,
and thus oblivion and age defeat,
is but an artifice, a sop to vanity,
is but a flower by the breezes bowed,
is but a ploy to counter destiny,
is but a foolish labor, ill-employed,
is but a fancy, and, as all may see,
is but cadaver, ashes, shadow, void.
Appendix E: Production photos for *Sueño* by OSU Photo Services
Scene 1: Discovery of nautilus

Scene 1: First memory of a striking hand
Scene 2: Sor Juana during confessing to Father Antonio

Scene 5: Sor Juana sees herself like an arrow piercing the heavens
Scene 9: Sor Juana on trial

Scene 10: Sor Juana examines her reality: panorama zero
Appendix F: Lantern Newspaper Article
Solo acts a stop on road to masters

Depictions of Mexican culture, poetry, drama reflect parts of students' lives

by Anne Rosado

Two graduate students working toward their Masters at UNH, Anesi Acevedo and Kathleen Almlof, have been selected for the National Latin American Film Festival in Mexico City. The two students are working on the script for a film about the life of the Mexican poet Octavio Paz, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1990.

Acevedo, who is working on a documentary about Paz, said she hopes to capture the poet's unique voice and philosophy through her film. "Paz was a master of the written and spoken word," she said. "His poetry and essays are filled with vibrant imagery and deep insights into human nature."

Almlof is working on a biographical film about Paz's life, focusing on his early years and the influence of his family and culture on his development as a poet. "Octavio Paz was a complex and controversial figure," she said. "His work challenges traditional notions of identity and politics and explores the complexities of Mexican history and culture."

The two students are currently working on the script and are looking for funding to bring their vision to life. They hope to begin shooting in late spring and complete the film by the end of the year.

They are working closely with a team of international filmmakers and are committed to creating a film that accurately reflects the spirit and essence of Octavio Paz's work. "We want to tell his story in a way that will resonate with audiences around the world," said Acevedo. "This film will be a tribute to a master who continues to inspire us today."
Appendix G: Chart with Dates of Field Research and Recorded Expenses
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates of Field Research</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Stay</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 15, 2002</td>
<td>FR: Columbus TO: Houston</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 17</td>
<td>FR: Houston TO: Mexico City</td>
<td>55 days in Mex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 10</td>
<td>FR: Mexico City TO: Houston</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 7</td>
<td>FR: Houston TO: Mexico City</td>
<td>9 days in Mex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 16</td>
<td>FR: Mexico City TO: Houston</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 23</td>
<td>FR: Houston TO: Columbus</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>December 12</td>
<td>FR: Columbus TO: Houston</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 22</td>
<td>FR: Houston TO: Mexico DF &amp; Veracruz.</td>
<td>11 days in Mex</td>
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<td>January 1, 2003</td>
<td>FR: Mexico City TO Houston</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 3</td>
<td>FR: Houston TO: Columbus</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 3rd - March 3rd</td>
<td>Preproduction at Columbus</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 4th through March 8th</td>
<td>Performance at Columbus</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 9th through June 20th</td>
<td>Post Production at Columbus</td>
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<td>Software</td>
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<td>RS</td>
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<td>Consumable Materials</td>
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<td>N-CM</td>
<td>Non-Consumable Materials</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>MP</td>
<td>Music Production</td>
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<tr>
<td>VP</td>
<td>Video Production</td>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Stage Production</td>
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| April  | 04.29  | T    | Columbus, OH-Houston, TX—STA Travel  
Depart: June 15, 2002 American Airlines FLT: 1495  
Return: Sep. 23, 2002 American Airlines FLT: 1428  
Covers entire Summer 2002 Departure & Return to Columbus | 311.50          |                |                    |
| May    | 05.08  | CM/VP| VHS 3pak. (CVS Pharmacy)                                                              | 5.99            |                |                    |
|        | 05.30  | T    | Houston, TX-Mexico, DF-Aviasca  
Depart: June, 17, 2002 FLT: 501  
Return: Aug, 10, 2002 FLT: 502 |                | In-kind         |                    |
| June   | L      | L    | Genoveva Perez-Figueroa Godinez 6/17/02 to 08/10/02 (55 days @ 166.00 Pesos) | 9120.00         | 900.00         |                    |
|        | F      |      | Food stipend for 55 days @ US20.00/day                                              | 1190.00         |                |                    |
|        | T      | City Bus—In Mexico City (No. 89546)                                                  | 4.00            | 0.42           |                    |
|        | T      | City Bus—In Mexico City (No. 60068)                                                  | 4.00            | 0.42           |                    |
|        | COM    |      | 1 Telephone Card 30.00 (Ladatel)                                                     | 30.00           | 3.13           |                    |
|        | 06.19  | COM  | Rental for Internet Access                                                           | 10.00           | 1.04           |                    |
| July   | 07.02  | COM  | Rental for Internet Access                                                           | 20.00           | 2.08           |                    |
|        | 07.03  | T    | Taxi—In Mexico City                                                                  | 27.00           | 2.81           |                    |
|        | 07.03  | T    | Taxi—In Mexico City                                                                  | 12.45           | 1.30           |                    |
|        | 07.04  | RM   | Video Rental "Yo la por de todas" (Blockbuster, Av. Uni. Col. Del Valle DF)           | 25.00           | 2.60           |                    |
|        | 07.09  | RM/MP| CD Interpretation of Sor Juana's Music "Funesta" (Claustro de Sor Juana) D.F.        | 125.00          | 13.02          |                    |
|        | 07.11  | COM  | Rental for Internet Access                                                           | 40.00           | 4.17           |                    |
|        | 07.11  | RM/MP| CD Interpretation of Sor Juana's Music "Le Phenix du Mexique (El Sotano) D.F.         | 158.26          | 16.49          |                    |
|        | 07.13  | N-CM/C| Fabric and materials for costume (Grupo Parisina, Canal de Miramontes DF)             | 438.15          | 45.64          |                    |
|        |        |      | 58.50 + 42.25 + 19.90 + 337.50 = 438.15                                              |                |                |                    |
|        | 07.21  | T    | Taxi—In Mexico City                                                                  | 130.00          | 13.54          |                    |
| August | 08.01  | T    | Taxi—In Mexico City                                                                  | 120.00          | 12.50          |                    |
|        | 08.03  | T    | Taxi—In Mexico City                                                                  | 65.00           | 6.77           |                    |
|        | 08.08  | T    | Taxi—In Mexico City                                                                  | 30.00           | 3.13           |                    |
|        | 08.26  | T    | Houston, TX-Mexico, DF—AeroMexico  
Depart: Sep, 7, 2002 FLT: 477  
Return: Sep, 16, 2002 FLT: 418 | 286.91          |                |                    |
<p>|        | 08.31  | CM/VP| Materials for Video Shoot (market)                                                   | 29.17           | 3.04           |                    |</p>
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<th>Description of Expense</th>
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<td>September</td>
<td>09.08</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Genoveva Perez-Figuere Godinez from 09.07.02 to 09.16.02 (9 days @ 166.00)</td>
<td>1494.00</td>
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<td>CM/VP</td>
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<td>09.15</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Bus—Primera Plus Arandas—Mexico City</td>
<td>260.00</td>
<td>27.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>09.16</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Taxi—From Bus Station to Lodging</td>
<td>65.00</td>
<td>6.63</td>
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<td></td>
<td>09.16</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Taxi—In Mexico City to Airport</td>
<td>147.00</td>
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<td>November</td>
<td>11.30</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Columbus, OH-Houston, TX—Continental Airlines</td>
<td>268.00</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11.30</td>
<td></td>
<td>Depart: Dec 12, 2002 FLT: 763 Return: Jan 03, 2003 FLT: 692</td>
<td>485.18</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12.09</td>
<td>CM/DM</td>
<td>Staged Reading—cheese, crackers, olives (Big Bear)</td>
<td>26.35</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.09</td>
<td>CM/DM</td>
<td>Staged Reading—2 bottles of wine (Big Bear)</td>
<td>17.96</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12.17</td>
<td>RDP/VP</td>
<td>Dupli. of Slides for Video Incorp. (Harry Ransom Human. Research Ctr) Austin TX</td>
<td>23.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.21</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Austin, TX-Houston, TX—Kerrville Bus Co. One way</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12.21</td>
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<td>Depart: Dec. 21, 2002 ONE WAY (picked up ride w/friend on my way to Austin)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.23</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Bus Mexico DF to Veracruz Roundway ticket</td>
<td>543.74</td>
<td>56.64</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12.23</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Hotel Santillana—Stayed from 12.22 to 12.24</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12.23</td>
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<td>Taxi (no receipt) FR: Veracruz TO: Boca del Rio</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12.23</td>
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<td>Taxi FR: bus TO: hotel</td>
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<td>12.24</td>
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<td>1150.00</td>
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<td>Bus To hotel</td>
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<td>.42</td>
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<td>Period</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Description of Expense</td>
<td>Amount in Pesos</td>
<td>Amt in DOLLARS</td>
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<td>Genoveva Perez-Figueroa Godinez from 12.26 to 01.01.03 (6 days @ 250.00)</td>
<td>1500.00</td>
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<td>Taxi (no receipt) FR: Boca del Río TO: Veracruz</td>
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<td>January</td>
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<td>Taxi (no receipt) FR: Lodging TO: Airport</td>
<td>216.13</td>
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<tr>
<td>01.18</td>
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<td>Video and Sound materials for Staged Production, DVD-R &amp; CDR (Micro Center)</td>
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<tr>
<td>01.19</td>
<td>SP</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nautilus shells</td>
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<td>01.20</td>
<td>VP</td>
<td></td>
<td>Video Footage for video sequences—DVD National Geographic &quot;Shape of Life&quot; NAGS606D 1320 Braddock Pl. Alexandria, VA 22314</td>
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<td>01.31</td>
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<td>Production materials for video shoot of handwriting and stage props for the construction of the manuscripts. Art Paper for shoot &amp; manuscripts props—Your College Bookstore</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>02.20</td>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Aquarium</td>
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<td>02.22</td>
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<td>Stage props—Michael's Store 3612 W. Dublin Grandville Rd. Columbus OH 43235</td>
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Total: 5002.07

This chart does not delineate expenses made by the Theatre Department, all in-kind services received nor bartering negotiated. (5 11.03)